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The Dene Development Question

by

Ⓒ Michael Bopp

A THESIS
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the Dene people of the Northwest Territories and their development options. In order to do this, three central tasks are undertaken.

First, it explores the cultural, historical, political and economic roots of the current development dilemna facing the native people (the Dene) of the Northwest Territories.

Second, it analyzes the current socio-cultural, political and economic obstacles that stand in the path of Dene local development.

Third, it proposes a combination of strategies which the Dene people can apply as practical tools for raising the critical awareness of local people in Dene settlements about their own predicament, and for mobilizing Dene settlements for self-determined development.

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A great debt of thanks is also due to Dr. Hayden Roberts and Marilyn Assheton-Smith for their detailed reading and insightful comments. Dr. Roberts' painstaking editorial review was also of immense help to me in the production of this thesis.

There is no way to thank adequately the many individuals interviewed for this study who gave me hours of their time and the benefit of their knowledge of the North and the Dene situation. The analysis contained in this thesis are so much a blend of their understanding and my own that I cannot separate the two.

Next, I wish to thank the Alumni Association of the University of Alberta and the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies of the University of Alberta for their financial assistance. The field work portion of this thesis could not have been accomplished without their help.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have gained enormously, both personally and academically, from my association with the Dene development question. I can only hope that the Dene will in some small way benefit, in return, from my work.

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Introduction

Preamble

"But some of the nonsense was evil, since it concealed great crimes. For example, teachers of children in the United States of America wrote this date on blackboards again and again, and asked the children to memorize it with pride and joy:

1492

The teachers told the children that this was when their continent was discovered by human beings. Actually, millions of human beings were already living full and imaginative lives on the continent in 1492. That was simply the year in which sea pirates began to cheat and rob and kill them.

Here was another piece of evil nonsense which children were taught: that the sea pirates eventually created a government which became a beacon of freedom to human beings everywhere else...

Here is how the sea pirates were able to take whatever they wanted from anybody else: they had the best boats in the world, and they were meaner than anybody else, and they had gunpowder, which was a mixture of potassium nitrate, charcoal, and sulphur. They touched this seemingly listless powder with fire and it turned violently into gas. This gas blew projectiles out of metal tubes at terrific velocities. The projectiles cut through meat and bone very easily; so the pirates could wreak the wiring or the bellows or the plumbing of a stubborn human being, even when he was far, far away.

The chief weapon of the sea pirates, however, was their capacity to astonish. Nobody else could believe, until it was much too late, how heartless and greedy they were." [Vonnegut 1974:10-12]

Background

Whenever one encounters the word development, as in "northern development", it is important to ascertain who is using the term, and to ferret out exactly what the user means by it.

In development studies students are trained to ask the questions: development of what or of whom?, development by whom? and development for the benefit of whom?

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has repeatedly asserted the position that "factors which proved roadblocks to development in the early 1970s-exaggerated concerns over ecological and environmental woes, dangers to native ways of life, and land claim settlements--now seem less a barrier as we move into the 1980's." [Edmonton Journal: November 13,1979] The recently defeated Conservative government had pledged to "vigorously pursue" a policy of "development" in Canada's north. The born-again Liberal government continues to insist that

2

native land claims and northern development are separate issues.

As Thomas Berger has pointed out, there are two very different philosophies of northern development based on very different assumptions. [Berger 1977] It would be naive to pretend, would it not, that the trans-national energy companies mean the same thing when they use the word "development" as do the Dene people of the Mackenzie Valley.

This thesis will focus on the Dene people of the Northwest Territories and their development options. In order to do this, three central tasks will be undertaken. First, we explore the cultural, historical, political and economic roots of the current development dilemna facing the native people (the Dene) of the Northwest Territories. Second, we analyze the current socio-cultural, political and economic obstacles that stand in the path of Dene local development. Third, we propose a combination of strategies which the Dene people can apply as practical tools for raising the critical awareness of local people in Dene settlements about their own predicament, and for mobilizing Dene settlements for self-determined development.

Chapter One will seek to answer the question, "Who are the Dene?". It will review the important ethnographic studies which attempt to reconstruct and understand the lifeways and the cultural patterns of the Dene before the coming of the Europeans. The reason for doing this is to expose the reader to the basic elements of Dene culture, because it is on this cultural base that the Dene must build a place for themsevles in today's world.

Chapter Two will trace the history of Dene contact with Euro-Canadian society. Its aim will be to show what happened to Dene economic patterns, social relations, and values as a result of interaction with the world outside the Mackenzie drainage area.

Chapter Three is a theoretical exploration of "modernization" and "development". Southern Canada, especially since the turn of the century, has been talking about "developing the North. Part of this vision included the modernization or assimilation of native peoples. It will be shown that such an idea has not improved the lives of Africans, Asians or South Americans who were colonized. It is highly unlikely that its application in the Canadian north will bring anything but harm to the Dene people.

Chapter Four will examine life among the Dene after their forced move into settlements in the 1960s. It will focus on two features of the new life-style: government and schooling. These particular features were chosen because they contributed more than any other to the rise of an Indian movement in the Canadian north.

Chapter Five portrays the development of the Dene Nation movement from its early days when the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories was formed to the present. The focus of this chapter is on the potential usefulness of this movement as an agency for promoting the "authentic development" of the Dene people.

Chapter Six is an analysis of the macro-context within which Dene development is taking place. It discusses such large issues as the energy crisis, the rising power of trans-national corporations and the power struggle between Ottawa and the provinces, in terms of their effect on the Dene development issue.

Chapter Seven examines the prospects for development in Dene settlements. It discusses specific strategies in three general areas: political development, economic development, and socio-cultural development. This chapter more than any other, attempts to answer the question "In what ways can the Dene Nation movement best serve the development interests of the Dene people?"

Field Work

Two field trips to the Northwest Territories were taken by the author in the process of this study. The first, in July-August of 1980, was a trip to Fort Good Hope for the Dene Nation national assembly. It was financed by a University of Alberta Alumni Association grant. The second, in March-April, 1981 was sponsored by the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies at the University of Alberta. On this second trip, the author conducted a series of in-depth interviews with individuals directly associated with the Dene Nation, the government of the Northwest Territories or those actively involved in the affairs of some Dene settlement. Forty-seven informal interviews were conducted, many of them two to three hours in length. Respondents were asked for their analysis of the factors within their range of competence that relate to the Dene development question. Names of respondents, particular communities, and in some cases, agencies have been withheld as a protection to the respondents in their communities or agencies. Much of the information gleaned during the interviews would not have been accessible to the author without his assurances that confidentiality of all respondents would be strictly guarded.

Whenever such information is being cited in this thesis, a bracket will appear indicating that the foregoing material come from "the author's field notes". This should signal the reader that what is given is not the author's own understanding, but rather that of one of the respondents interviewed during this study.

A final note should be added concerning the intentions of this study vis-a-vis the Dene themselves. Development research about the Dene was undertaken with the intention that the results would be of some use to the Dene themselves. Prescriptive formulas have not been offered for development problems the Dene face, though principles and issues have been thoroughly discussed. If the Dene themselves do not evolve their own development solutions, the result is more likely to be the academic development of some researchers than the authentic development of the Dene people.

I. Roots

A. Who are the Dene

The Dene (pronounced Dennay) are the Athapaskan-speaking aboriginal peoples of the Mackenzie River drainage area, a region which covers the entire western portion of the Northwest Territories below the treeline. The major sub-groups are classified by ethnologists and historians according to language, and to a lesser extent by slight cultural variations as well as by traditional regions of occupancy. [Helm et. al. 1975] These are the Kutchin, or Loucheoux, and Hare in the northwest, the Kaska (also called Tselona or Nelson people) in the west and the southwest respectively, the Beaver in the south, the Slave (pronounced Slavey) in the central region north to the approximate latitude of the current settlement of Fort Providence, the Dogrib people in the north central region, the Bear Lake people around the region of Bear Lake, the Yellowknife people to the north and east, and the Chipewyan people who occupied a large area covering nearly the entire far eastern section of the Mackenzie drainage system.

These Dene of the Northwest Territories are linguistically and culturally of the same general heritage as are the Koyukon of Alaska and the Yukon Territories, the Tanana of Alaska and the Navaho and Apache of the Southwest United States, as well as of other groups in northern California and Oregon. (See figure 1 - Map showing approximate area of Dene traditional occupancy (Dene caveat area). [from Watkins 1977:X])

All of these people speak a language that is essentially Athapaskan. Linguist-ethnographers Peter Gardner and Jane Christian report:

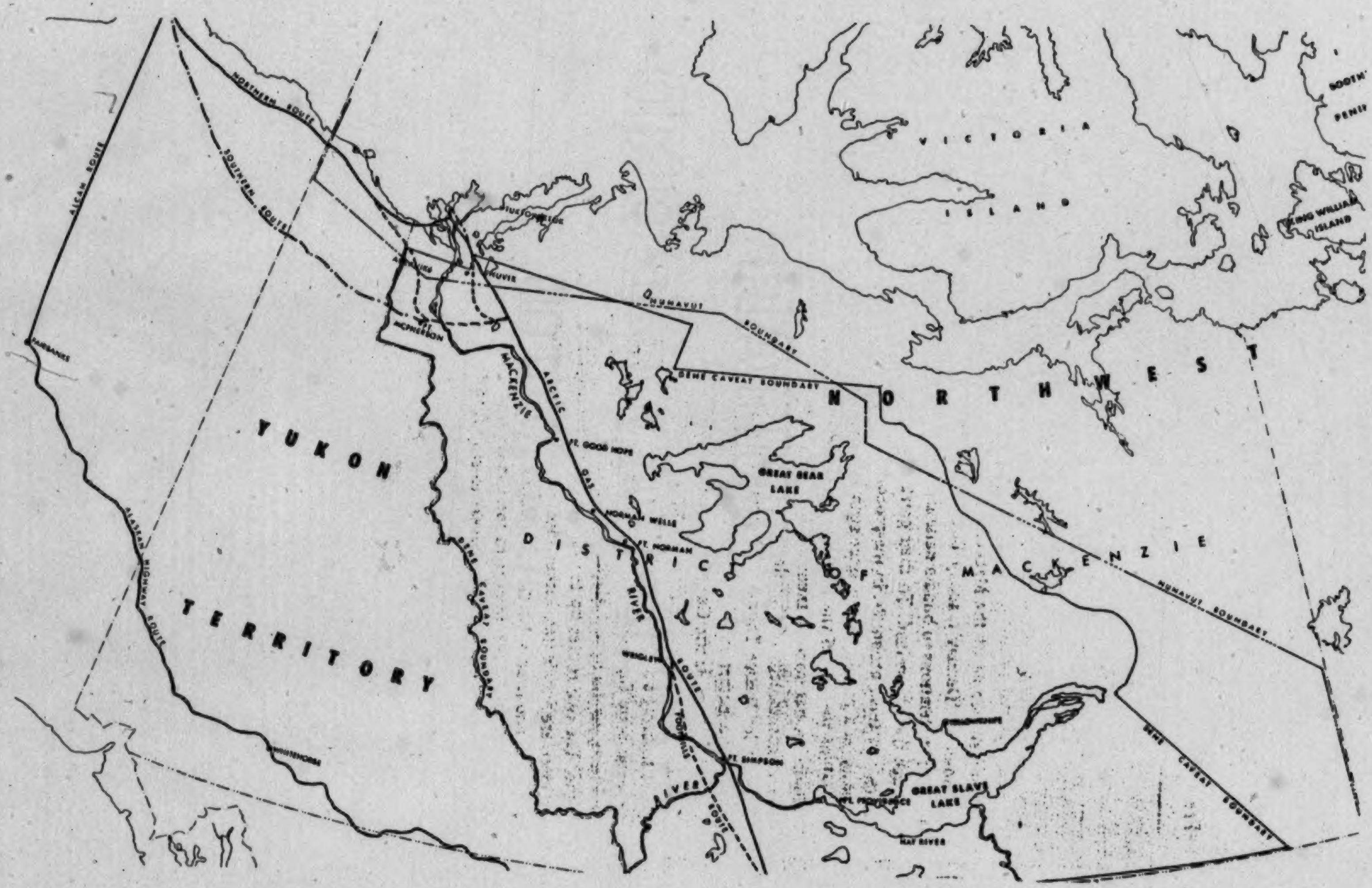
> "Most people can understand well over half of what is said by people coming from four hundred miles away or more, along the Mackenzie and its tributaries. As with intra-community individuals, each settlement is somewhat different from all others, but basic communication can still take place." [1977:37]

In identifying who the Dene are, it is important at the outset to realize that they are as much "one people" as are Frenchmen, Koreans or any other "people" now accorded sovereignty over their territory by the rest of the world. Speaking of ethnic boundaries between the various sub-groups of Dene people, Christian and Gardner raised the question.

> "Whether, ... they even exist objectively, except as artificial constructs, like boundaries between colours; there are no marked discontinuities that would provide ... social or linguistic boundaries." [1977:392]

This is not to say that all Dene are the same, but only that they have the same roots. That the Dene have recently (1974) declared to themselves and to the world that

> "We the Dene of the Northwest Territories insist on the right to be regarded by ourselves and the world as a Nation."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DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE
YUKON
TERRITORY
NUNAVUT BOUNDARY
DENE CAVEAT BOUNDARY
NORTHERN ROUTE
SOUTHERN ROUTE
ALCAN ROUTE
ALASKAN HIGHWAY ROUTE
FAIRBANKS
WHITEHORSE
TUKTOYAKTUK
INUVIK
AKLAVIK
FT. MCPHERSON
MACKENZIE
ARCTIC
GAS
RIVER
ROUTE
FT. GOOD HOPE
NORMAN WELLS
FT. NORMAN
GREAT BEAR LAKE
WRIGLEY
FT. SIMPSON
LIARD RIVER
FT. PROVIDENCE
GREAT SLAVE LAKE
HAY RIVER
YELLOWKNIFE

Figure 1

Map showing approximate area of Dene traditional occupancy (Dene caveat area)
From Watkins 1977:X

struggling for

"a place in the world community where we can exercise our right to self-determination as a distinct people and as a nation." [in Watkins 1977:3-4]

[1] is a critical fact which forms one of the key historical underpinnings of this thesis.

The Dene Nation has claimed sovereignty over an an area which they say they have occupied and effectively owned since time immemorial. They argue that they have never ceded their ownership rights or their sovereignty in this their homeland. Their claim consists of some 450,000 square miles of land and is effectively all of the Mackenzie drainage area from the Yukon border in the west, the Alberta border on the south (there are Beaver Dene in Alberta who consider themselves as a part of the Dene Nation) to the barren lands in the east and the treeline to the north.

In order to grasp the full significance of the emergence of the Dene Nation as a socio-political entity and as an actor in the world community of nations it will be necessary to trace, however scantily, the history of contact between the Dene and the Euro-Canadian cultures and to describe the affect this contact has had on Dene culture, economy, politics, and survival (adaptation potential).

---

[1] From the "Dene Declaration" passed as a resolution during the Annual National Assembly of the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories and the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories in Fort Simpson in July of 1975. Republished in Mel Watkins. *Dene Nation - Colony Within* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1977), P 3-4.

The Land

The first impression recorded by travellers (since the 1700s) to the Mackenzie region is of the vastness and beauty of the land. The Dene developed technology and exploitative techniques typical of hunting and gathering peoples, but specifically adapted to the northern "bush". I can do no better than to cite anthropologist June Helm in describing that land.

"The bush is composed of stands of boreal forest interspersed with thousands upon thousands of lakes, streams, and swamps. The waters of the last glaciation are still draining from the land.

From the north arm of Great Slave Lake to the southeastern most shores of Great Bear Lake extends a chain of lakes that mark a geological and forest-cover breakline. To the west of the chain of lakes are the Mackenzie River lowlands. In these lowlands, glacial, alluvial and lucustrine soils laid down during the Cenozoic era support good sized trees; white spruce, poplar and birch, with black spruce and tamarack in the swamps and jackpine in the sandy soils.

...east of the axis of lakes...lie the low hills and granite and balsalt outcrops of the Precambrian Shield; the forest cover is stunted growth and is found chiefly in alluvial flats or on well drained river slopes. Beyond (east and to some extent north) of this "rock country" as the Dogrib call it, lies the barren grounds or Tundra, which...(the Dene) penetrate only briefly and intermittently." [Helm 1973:2] (brackets in the Helm text are mine)

To this description must be added that west of the Mackenzie River, land changes dramatically again as range after range of mountains appear extending all the way to the Yukon border and beyond to Alaska and the sea. The valleys and lowlands are covered with spruce, poplar and birch as well as jackpine, lower shrubs and bushes typical of boreal forest areas. The entire western portion of the Territories tends to be higher and drier than eastern areas, though occasional patches of muskeg and swamp may be found in the valleys and lowlands.

Climate

The climate of the area varies slightly from district to district and is generally colder in the northern parts. The Mackenzie drainage area in general has long cold winters and short warm summers. The coldest months are December, January and February during which the mean isotherm is approximately -30 degrees centigrade with extremes down to -55 degrees centigrade. The warmest months are July and August with the mean isotherm of 15 to 20 degrees centigrade with extremes ranging from 30 to 35 degrees centigrade. Annual precipitation averages about 15 inches a year including an annual mean snowfall of about 50 inches which comes in early winter and doesn't melt until spring. [Kendrew and Currie 1955]

The Inhabitants of the Land

The Arctic and sub-Arctic wilderness was described by Thomas Berger in his *Northern Frontiers Northern Homeland* as a "wilderness of incredible beauty, a rich and varied ecosystem inhabited by thriving populations of wildlife." [Berger 1977:xii]

When the Euro-Canadians penetrated the north they found vast herds of caribou ranging the entire sub-Arctic region. Large numbers of muskox, moose, deer, bear, wolf, fox, beaver, muskrat, lynx, martin, rabbits, squirrels and a host of water- and dry-land fowl must be included in a partial list of the species which abundantly graced the region. The rivers and lakes were literally teeming with fish, including golden eye, several species of white fish, arctic greyling, lake trout, dolly vardin, northern pike, and yellow walleye to name only a few species.

The Dene were also there. Archeologists have dated Dene occupancy in the Northwest Territories from a wave of migration from eastern Asia believed to have taken place between 10,000 and 14,000 years ago. Artifacts made from caribou bone were recently (1977) found in Old Crow in the northeastern Yukon that were estimated to be approximately 14,000 years old. Old Crow people are Kutchin (Loucheaux) Dene. It interesting to note that the first known Euro-Canadian penetrations of the Mackenzie area took place some 13,500 years later, just after 1770.

B. How the Dene Lived

When the first voyageurs and fur traders made contact with northern Dene people it was probably with Chipewyan who had journeyed to a Hudson Bay post on the west side of Hudson Bay in 1714. [Hearne 1958:113] By 1750 the Chipewyan were acting as middlemen in small-scale trading with Dogrib and Yellowknife peoples further inland.

The cultural pattern of the Dene at this time was that of a hunting and gathering people who exploited an extraordinarily harsh, but equally abundant natural larder. The earliest records we have describing how the Dene lived are those of earlier travellers, traders, and missionaries. The letters of George Keith and W.F. Wenzle to Roderick Mackenzie [in L.R. Mason 1889-1890] are rich in detail concerning the lifeways, customs and salient characteristics of the Dene. These and other early reports such as the journal of Father Emile Petitot [Petitot 1891] confirm the much later findings of ethnographers. [J.R. Mason 1913; Honigmann 1946, 1949, 1954; Nelson 1973; and especially Helm 1961, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1980; Helm and Lurie 1961; Helm et al 1975; and Asch 1972, 1974] All of these have studied Dene cultural patterns, economy, language and traditions and have attempted to reconstruct a picture of the lifeways as they were at the beginning of the contact period.

Mobility was the key to survival in the subarctic. For the Dene, the ability to move as the exigencies of the hunt demanded dictated a social structure that was somewhat fluid, individualistic and above all portable. Living as they did solely from the fish, fowl and game they harvested from the land, there was no possibility whatsoever that the Dene could have congregated in villages and survived. The land simply could not have supported a human population density greater than that which the Dene permitted themselves.

June Helm describes three categories of socioterritorial groups in her study of the Dogrib Dene. Her analysis is precise and with minor variations can be applied to all of the Dene peoples in the Mackenzie area.[2]. The three categories she identifies are

1) The regional band
2) The local band
3) The task group [Helm 1968:118]

She explains that in practice a person was always a member of some local band which figured in a cluster of local bands comprising a regional band. The task group is a temporary organization which lasts for the duration of some task for which the group was especially formed. For example, a caribou hunt may require the cooperation of eight to ten members of the local or regional band who will agree to work together because it is more efficient than working separately. The same individuals may or may not form a task group for the next hunt. Helm lists three major determinants of recruitment and membership for these various levels of Dene traditional social organization. These are:

---

[2] Helm herself writes "I present the discussion in terms of the Dogribs, on whom I have the most data. I have, however, drawn on material from neighbouring Arctic Drainage Athapaskan peoples to build the broad characterization which I believe to be generally applicable to the Mackenzie Drainage Athapaskan or Dene."[Helm 1968:118 footnote #1]

1) The territorial range
2) Specific resources and resource locales within the range
3) Kinship [Helm 1968:118-119]

These determinants fluctuated in their relative influence on band membership over time as various local and even regional bands formed, dissolved and flowed into one another. When these changes occurred it was because of such variables as intermarriage or fluctuation and migration of game populations, as well as natural or social catastrophes such as famine, epidemics or wars.

The Regional Band

The regional band consisted of from twelve to fifty or more nuclear families (mother, father, children, grandparents, and unmarried siblings). These people exploited the resources within a recognized range or territory and were known to themselves and regional groups as a "people". The territories were large enough to contain adequate resources to sustain a regional band for generations. Except for specific gatherings, such as the mid-summer fish camp assembly, the total membership of a regional band was rarely if ever physically together. "Most of the time", as Helm puts it, "physical co-presence and social communication is shifting, intermittent, and piecemeal." [Helm 1968: 121]

The Local Band

The primary Dene social unit was a local band. It was also the basic production unit of the Dene economy in that almost all harvesting (production) and utilization of resources took place on this level. The local band, sometimes called the family camp [Asch 1974] consisted of from two to twelve nuclear families including dependants. The average seems to have been around four families at the time of Helm's study (1968) but she speculates that these groups may have been typically smaller in earlier times, depending of course on the availability of resources. Like the regional band, the local band tended to concentrate its activities in a specific territory which was in fact a sub-territory of the area traditionally exploited by the original band. Local bands were, however, free to range over the entire territory traditionally exploited by the regional band to which they belonged. There is considerable evidence to show that even the regional territories were approximations of how much land was needed to sustain the members of a particular regional band. There was no concept of ownership of land per se and generally speaking no serious attempt was made to prohibit overlapping in the usage of specific areas in the exploitating of specific local resources (e.g. a particularly productive fish lake).

Because of Dr. Helm's consciencíousness in attendence to empirical detail, her summary of Dene socio-territorial groups gives us a fairly clear picture of what Dene social organization was like at the time of contact with Euro-Canadian society.

When we undertake to explore the kinds of social problems which have arisen as the Dene have moved into established settlements (a process which only began in the late 1940's), and when we strive to find solutions to those problems which may at the same time assist the development of the Dene people, it is to this primary social skeleton, as well as to the values, language, traditions and customs of Dene culture that we must turn for clues as to how, and in which direction to proceed.

C. Lifeways

Dene lifeways were linked intimately and inexorabely to economic practicalities. When one reflects on what is needed in order to survive in the sub-Arctic, the list is short but every item is crucial: food, fire, shelter and clothing. Just prior to the coming of the white man the Dene were utilizing technologies and methods that they had developed over at least 10,000 years of occupancy of that land; techniques that had enabled them to thrive generation after generation in that seemingly inhospitable country. Dene lifeways revolved around the most efficient exploitation of bush resources possible for a people whose relentless pursuit of food had not permitted them the luxury of settlement or the discovery of iron.

Winters were generally spent in local band encampments near the shores of larger lakes. There the dietary staples of fish and small game could be obtained in a more or less constant supply. The labour in these encampments, as with all Dene ventures, was organized along sex and age lines. The men hunted big game such as caribou, moose, muskox and bear. The primary methods of securing game were snaring with babiche (sinew), snares, deadfalls and other sorts of traps. Larger game was also hunted with bow and arrows, spears, and sometimes clubs. A favourite method was to attack larger game animals as they were crossing water or open country. Wentzle reports

"Modes of hunting are numerous. In the spring, when a crust is formed upon the snow, the Indians frequently run down the elk and caribou, which they fatigue so much that they often kill them with spears. In summer and winter they pursue them with dogs into snares...in the rutting season...the natives rub the shoulder of an elk against a tree, at the same time imitating the cry of an elk; this brings the animal quite close, when they are easily killed with bow and arrows." [in L.R. Mason 1889:82][3]

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[3] The same method was and still is used for hunting moose.

The hunting of large game, especially caribou, was best accomplished in the co-operative task group. These all-male hunting parties were always formed for the fall and spring caribou hunts. Smaller task groups were formed as needed for a variety of other activities. The men also cut trees used for shelter construction, drying racks and other camp necessities. As well, they fashioned many of the tools needed in Dene survival activities. Clubs, spears, bows and arrows, canoes, snares, knives and axes, sleds and snowshoes provide a partial list of these.

The women were responsible for most of the manufacturing of useable products from harvested bush resources. They tanned the hides (an exceedingly arduous and time-consuming task) and made all the clothing including footwear, mitts and summer and winter costumes for men, women and children. They prepared all meat and fish to be cooked or dried, and gathered berries and herbs in season. As well, they gathered willow for nets, made babiche for snowshoes, snares and thread, gathered firewood and tended snares and traps close to camp. The women also birthed and for the most part raised the children, though in this latter responsibility they had considerable help from older girls.

It is probable that people moved about quite a bit during the winter in pursuit of game and that they returned to their base camp only when it was convenient to do so. During the pre-contact period winter travel was done on foot or with snowshoes. Gear was often transported by hand-pulled sleds. The draft dog was introduced to the North by Europeans. Before the dogteam era it was easier to bring people to game than to lug quantities of meat over miles of rough terrain. [Asch 1977:45]

Helm explains that January and February were the hardest months for the people. She cites one informant who tells her:

"When it is real cold you cannot get close to caribou. The sound comes from a long distance. By the time you get close, the caribou are running away."

[Helm 1972:14] The fish are "not travelling" at this time either. They have sought refuge from the cold in the deepest parts of the lakes beyond the reach of Dene nets.

March and April bring longer, warmer days. The game and fish "start travelling again" [Helm Ibid] and the caribou begin their spring migration to the barren land. April was called "snow blindness month" (today it is called Easter month) and was the time of preparation for the spring hunt for caribou and (in pre-contact days) to a much lesser extent the hunting of beaver and muskrats.

By May the ice is clearing from the smaller lakes and streams and the hunt was carried on with low draft canoes usually covered with moose hide or bark. Mid-summer (June-July) was a time of in-gathering at fish lakes. Large encampments of two hundred or more persons would catch and dry fish, but as well would exchange news, make or settle contracts, dance and sing, tell stories, arrange marriages, settle disputes and play amusing gambling games (such as the exciting bone game).

It is interesting to note that these gatherings were not structured in terms of the membership of particular local or even regional bands. There was considerable overlapping from year to year. Inter-marriage was common. Contracts enlisting co-operation on various tasks such as the upcoming fall caribou hunt (August - September) were made.

It was not uncommon for an individual or even a whole family to decide at this time to join another local or regional band. There is little evidence that these gatherings had any centralized leadership. The only time they took on a serious and political nature was if there was threat of war.[4] This fluidity of social structure bounded by the clear operative principle of Dene unity is important to stress, because it serves to demonstrate that the Dene have always identified themselves as a people. These roots run so deep that it is virtually impossible to see the end of them.

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[4] These observations come out of the writer's interviews with Dene leadership at a direct descendant of these traditional gatherings; The Dene National Assembly, held at Fort Good Hope (N.W.T.) in July of 1980. They are also confirmed by the observations of earlier voyageurs and travellers to the North in the early 1800's as well as by anthropological data.

D. Individual Autonomy, Egalitarianism and other Cultural Traits

In 1913 J. Alden Mason, in the conclusion of his study of the Great Slave Lake Dene wrote:

"Individualism seems to be the keynote to the interpretation of this culture. The individual is bound by few taboos and coerced by no authority." [1946:43 originally 1913]

This perspective is confirmed in virtually every thorough ethnographic account of Dene cultural patterns including Honigmann [1946, 1949, 1954], Asch [1974], and especially Helm [1961, 1968, 1972]. In Helm's "Lynx Point" study she states:

"...minding one's own business is a cardinal principle in Slavey life. Percepts, aid, or warnings are seldom volunteered to others. Even one's children...are allowed to a great extent to govern their own lives. One almost never interfers with another's children... In regard to adults, noninterference is the rule. Each person is his own boss..." [1961:97]

At the end of their exceptionally detailed 1977 study of Dene linguistic and cultural traits, a study focussing specifically on the individual Dene thought and communication patterns, Christian and Gardner emphasize the central role played by individualism and self-reliance, "particularly in regard to behavior that can be construed as economic and political". [Christian and Gardner 1977:389]

> They point out that the cultural norms for creating a leader dictate a selection method that is situational and supported by group concensus as opposed to the Euro-Canadian concept of institutional rule effected by means of a majority election. The whole idea of voting is utterly foreign to Dene culture. People do not traditionally rally support behind a chief or "band council" (a southern white import to the north). Whether the majority favour a proposition or not has little or no influence on the individual Dene in terms of engaging in his or her support. All individuals have to be convinced one by one. [Ibid:92]

This ethnographic data also sheds considerable light on the treaties the Dene allegedly signed in which

> "the said Indians do hereby cede, surrender and yield up to the government of the dominion of Canada... All their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the land..." [from the text to Treaty 11 reprinted in Fumoleau 1977:16]

because the treaty commissioner asked the Dene to

> "name certain chiefs and headsmen who would be authorized on their behalf to conduct such negotiations and sign any treaty to be founded thereon..." [Treaty 11:ibid]

Such "representation" was, and for the most part still is, utterly foreign to Dene thinking. This issue will be taken up in more detail in later sections as we examine the question of the treaties, and the issue of Dene government.

For the present it is sufficient to state that ethnographic data reconstructing Dene lifeways and value systems have enormous bearing on any attempt to grapple with Dene development issues today because development is essentially a growth process out of one condition and into another.

Other Traits

The following is a list of Dene sociocultural patterns as observed by a variety of researchers including material drawn from my own fieldwork. The list is presented here in point form without discussion simply to give readers largely unfamiliar with the Dene some idea of what the face of Dene culture looks like, and to suggest what results can be expected from the interface of the Dene and Euro-Canadian culture.

1.

Egalitarianism - a deep aversion to any one person acquiring economic or political advantage over the others

2.

Non-interference - a behaviour norm that dictates a "mind your own business policy" in all but the most extreme of altercations.

3.

Avoidance and withdrawal - as a means of handling unpleasant persons or situations.

4.

Non-agression - a marked aversion for agressive behaviour in oneself or in others.

5.

Grievances harboured - a tendency to harbour grievances rather than to confront others or to express those differences.

6.

Indirectness or obliqueness in feeling out the attitudes and wishes of others. It is considered bad manners to ask another person to "lay their cards on the table".

7.

Aloofness or taciturnity - a marked lack of outward display of emotions. A tendency to be low-key, quiet and non-committal.

8.

Pragmatic - a preference for the practical and the here-and-now. Not overly given to abstractions.

9.

Noncritical frankness - in expressing views on issues that affect the group in the context of serious discussion.

From June Helm's leadership studies [1956] Lynx Point Study [1961], and Helm and Lurie's [1961] study of the Lac Lamartre Dene we can assemble at least a partial list of behaviours that are not approved of in Dene society. These include gossiping, lying, the fabrication of stories for self-aggrandizment, bossiness, overt manipulation of others, stealing, and perhaps the most serious of all, not being a hard worker, especially where the hunt is concerned.

Within traditional Dene society, non-interference was so highly valued that Wentzle was moved to report "as to forms of government, police and regulations, they have none". [in Mason 1889:89] Further research findings clearly contradict this view, however. [Keith in Mason 1890: 88, Helm 1956:138-140]

Social control was exercised by informal ostracism and then only in the most extreme of cases. Richardson reports in his travel journal dated 1847 and 1848 that among the Fort Franklin area Dene

"Order is maintained in the tribe solely by public opinion. It is no one's duty to repress immorality or breach of the laws of society which custom has established among them... A man's conduct must be bad indeed and threaten the general peace before he would be expelled from the society; no amount of idleness or selfishness entails such a punishment." [Richardson 1851 Vol. 2:56]

While more will be said on the issue of Dene traditional modes of government in a subsequent section, it is interesting to note that the principle of non-interference was so strong among the Dene that they did not concretize institutions of social control. If there was control to be exercised the mechanism flowed out of the exigencies of a specific situation and dissolved again as the situation passed. The implications of this social fact are enormous at the point of interface between Euro-Canadian and Dene cultures in the framework of colonial intrusion.

E. Dene Government and Leadership Patterns

In traditional Athapaskan societies the high valuation of individual autonomy demanded a delicate interplay between modes of governance and leadership on the one hand and the autonomous individual on the other. Indeed, these polar opposites are balanced in all socio-political systems according to the cultural inclinations of the specific society in question. The Dene solution to this paradox was traditionally weighted to the side of the individual. Yet to pronounce that Dene society was totally individualistic, having no governmental or leadership forms as some writers have done [Wentxle 1889, Honigmann 1946 1949 and even Helm 1946], is to display an ethnocentric blindness much like that manifested by the architects of Indian Treaties 8 and 11.

June Helm [1956] went so far as to state "the tribe had no internal affairs in the political sense. Nowhere in the literature...do we find evidence of an exception to this statement."[1956:134] To her credit she has softened considerabley on this point [Helm 1961] in later works based on observations made during her own meticulously conducted field studies.

What is most likely, considering that the Dene were able to maintain a social order for at least 10,000 years that ensured survival in a hostile sub-arctic climate, is that their modes of governance bear the stamp of Dene culture which tends to stress a very here-and-now pragmatism as well as an aversion for overt interference with the autonomy of individuals except in extreme cases.

John MacDonell, writing about 1800, observed a Chipewyan gathering and reports:

"Their government resembles that of the patriarchs of old, each family making a distinct community, and the elders having only the right of advising but not of dictating - however in affairs of consequence the old men of the whole camp assemble and deliberate on the subjects which have caused their meeting...at last often a few groans and pious ejaculations from the old men which are answered by the young men with great readiness, all this ceremony being done, Quaker-like the spirit moves one of the elders who gets up and makes a long harangue. The young men are permitted to be of the council and even frequently interfere in their debates which they do with great asperity, particularly when they regard the Europeans or the neighboring nations of whom they entertain an implacable hatred - however the sage councils of these old patriarchs act as a counterpoise to the impetuosity of youth ... Some of them are great orators and are said to deliver themselves with great perspicuity and address but particularly they apply their speeches more to the passions than to the understanding; the greatest silence prevails and they make it a fixed point of never interrupting one another while speaking; in general they are grave but not serious and will either join in solemn or gay subjects of discourse."[cited by Helm 1956:41]

The process described by MacDonell is essentially the same as that followed in important Dene gatherings today. Decisions are reached after careful deliberation and often lengthy (by Euro-Canadian standards) discussions. The method of reaching decision is by general concensus of virtually all participants that agreement has indeed been reached. There is no fixed number of participants.[5] If an issue concerned all members of a local or even regional band, all participated in the discussion. Women were often excluded from deliberations in traditional Dene meetings unless the issues directly concerned them. This is probably accounted for in terms of Dene traditional concepts of division of labour and sex lines, combined with the practical notion that concensus was required of the active participants in any given enterprise be it the hunt, war, or litigation. If the enterprise was one which traditionally was undertaken by women then women were required to participate in the discussion.[6]

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[5] These observations came out of the writer's interviews with Dene leadership at a direct descendant of these traditional gatherings, The Dene national assembly, held at Fort Good Hope (N.W.T.) in July of 1980. They are also confirmed by the observations of early voyageurs and travellers to the north in the early 1800s as well as by anthropological data.

The usual setting for discussion was of course the family camp (local band) and usually questions pertained to day-to-day survival issues. Occasionally (for example at summer fish camp) large meetings took place, though only if there were some larger issue such as war to discuss.

The process of these meetings was (and is) very simple. There was no fixed agenda. The people simply talked until concensus was reached. Such a conference may have taken four or five days or even longer. Most local issues, however, were resolved more expeditiously simply because there were fewer participants. There was (traditionally) no pressure to hurry or clip presentations to save time. During these meetings leaders participated as active speakers and listeners. while they certainly were an important part of the process they by no means determined its outcome.

Dene Leaders

It will be useful to our discussion of Dene development to examine traditional Dene concepts of leadeship. "Traditional Dene leaders...could only speak for their people once a position through concensus had been reached by the people. Leaders apart from the people were never regarded as the decision makers. Leaders always had a very important role in the development of the position of their people on a given subject, but only through dialogue, and debate between leaders and their people were decisions finally reached... In the Dene way, dialogue remains the obligation of everyone". [Dene Nation 1979]

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[6] In large gatherings such as the Dene national assembly I attended in Fort Good Hope women were very active in expressing their views though this change may be due to attitude shift on women's issues in the dominant Canadian society.

Helm's search of historical records and ethnographic material for clues as to Dene leadership patterns [1956] uncovered at least three different leadership roles, all of them arising our of specific genres of activity: the leader of the local band, the war leader, and later on the trading chief.

The latter category was created by the white fur traders for their own purposes and cannot rightfully be called a "traditional" Dene leader. [Helm 1956:140]

Richardson describes some of the qualities of Dene leadership and the social relations arising from the interplay of the leaders and the people.

"Superior powers of mind, combined with skill in hunting, raise a few into chiefs (leaders), under whose guidance a greater or smaller number of families place themselves, and a chief is great or small according to the length of his tail (i.e. the number of his followers). His clients and he are bound together by mutual advantage and may and do separate as inclination prompts..." [Richardson 1851 Vol. 26]

That superiority as a hunter was an important (perhaps prime) quality of a leader is confirmed in many places in the literature [e.g. Hearne 1958:101, Keith, in Masson 1890:114, Wentxle, in Masson 1889:89]. It is also probable that anyone attributed leadership capacity was thought to have some power in the supernatural (medicine) realm as well. Mason's description of leadership qualifications seems to fit the earlier northern Athapaskans as a group. "These leaders are elderly men as a rule, often the paternal patriarchs of a band, and being generally good hunters, experienced woodsmen, and more efficient than the majority of their fellows, their judgement is respected by the members of the gang. ...The chiefs or leaders were neither elected or appointed but were those whose powerful 'medicine' caused them to be feared and respected and whose authority, knowledge and compentency were admitted to be superior." [Mason 1946:34]

Helm's Lynx Point Study [1961] rounds out somewhat our picture of Dene leadership patterns, and more particularly the relationship between leaders and people. This rapport is crucial because of the dichotomy between the Dene value of individual autonomy on one hand and the need for leadership at certain specific times on the other.

Coinciding with Nelson and other earlier observations, Helm [1961] finds that Dene leadership is a self-assumed responsibility, not a power per se. One is acknowledged as a leader, hence validating one's assumption of responsibility in some area (e.g. the hunt), by achievement, not ascription and one holds the post only with the sanction of the group.

[Helm1961:161, 162, 163] The Dene style of leadership is not for the most part overtly directive. A Dene leader strove to avoid seeming too bossy, threatening or antagonizing (a violation of the individualism norm) to those on whom he had to rely for labour and co-operation. Direct orders and demands were kept to a minimum.

If a man was acknowledged as war chief his authority extended only as long as the war and did not affect other areas of Dene life. This fluid style of government institutions, that appeared only when co-ordination of many individuals was essential and disappeared again to permit a resumption of the normal individualistic pattern of Dene life, served very well in an environment that required (for survival) that small autonomous bands range over a vast area in search of food, and prohibited, simply by the availability of food, permanent large scale settlement. It was an ingenious cultural adaptation and more will be said in later sections on its application (in principle at least) to the current situation which now confronts the Dene people.

II. Intrusion

A. In the Beginning

Helm calls "the beginnings of knowledge, experience, and response by Athapaskan peoples to the European cultural presence" as the "incipient-early contact" period. [Helm et al 1975:312] The use of the term "incipient" refers, in this case, to the fact the Dene had limited access to European goods through Indian or Eskimo intermediaries even when no direct contact had yet occurred.

The first signs of European incursion into Athapaskan territory were the diseases and the goods which preceded the advent of the fur-trader heralding his advance into new territories. The Chipewyan Dene assumed the role of middlemen in a trade link between the Hudson Bay Company post at York Factory on the west coast of Hudson Bay and other Athapaskan groups further west and south. This occurred in the first quarter of the 1700s. Helm describes what happened.

> "The first contacted tribes--Cree, Chipewyan, then Beaver and Yellowknives--obtained firearms and turned to fur-raiding and general bullying of their defenceless Athapaskan neighbours, and, when possible, of each other." [Helm et al 1975:314]

The major trading items at this time were limited to metal tools, traps and cooking utensils as well as cloth.

Slavey, Dogrib and Sekani peoples were forced at various times to flee their traditional homeland on the tide of Chipewyan, Beaver and Yellowknife aggression. However, intra-Dene hostility soon interfered with the fur-trade operations, and evermindful of the commercial imperative, the traders began setting up trading centers in the territories of Dogrib, Slavey and other peripheral groups thus eliminating the middleman role altogether. With the establishment of an "enduring point-of-trade" [Helm et al 1975:315] in their own country, most Dene groups had "direct, regular, and unmolested" [Ibid] access to European goods.

One of the first immediate effects of this change was that an annual trek to the trading post became a part of the Dene yearly round. At least once annually (usually after the spring hunt) furs, dried fish and meat were traded for metal tools and other staple commodities. June Helm describes the very beginnings of Dene involvement with Euro-Canadian economic forms in terms of the emergence of a kind of a dependency.

"The Athapaskans were free on the land, and it was in the interest of the fur-trade that they remain so, but they became increasingly dependent on the post as the source of a new level of living. Subsistence on wild game and fish remained, and some items of clothing, shelter, and transportation continued to be fashioned of materials from the land. But the tools and implements to process natural materials derived more and more from the traders." [Helm et al 1975:316]

It will not be possible to elaborate the current dilemma faced by the Dene in the path of their own development without first describing at least minimally the effects wrought by the fur-trade on Dene traditional economy, social relations and values. This is because while many changes have occurred to alter the pattern of Dene life since the beginning of the contact period, current Dene cultural patterns are by no means carbon copies of the Euro-Canadian culture that has intruded upon them. Indeed, Michael Asch writes that:

"Carefully accumulated historic evidence tends to support the Dene claim that no fundamental disruption in their social life occurred until the end of the fur-trade era; that is until roughly the end of the Second World War." [Asch 1974] (emphasis mine)

This view is supported by many other Athapaskanists and cultural historians [Fumoleau 1977, Helm 1975, Helm & Leacock 1971, Janes 1976, Sharpe 1977, D. Smith, 1976b, J. Smith, 1976].

The Dene were colonized by southern Canada during the fur-trade era, but unlike Asian and African societies which became cash crop producers for some metropolitan power and in so doing were forced to reorganize their economic activities and their lifestyles to conform with more production demands for "increased efficiency", the Dene continued into the 1960's to live in small camps (though many local bands did built permanent dwellings during the fur-trade era), continued to migrate from fish lake to hunting areas, and in fact continued to operate in much the same way as they had done for thousands of years.

This was, as Asch points out, chiefly because the fur-trade was a unique kind of merchant capitalism. It's uniqueness was derived from the nature of the commodity--furs. In order to become a primary producer the Dene had only to increase activity in a certain sector of their traditional economy.

While gathering furs was not new to the Dene, gathering them for profit was. Consequently, a new value concept was introduced: the pursuit of personal gain as distinct from the welfare of the group.

The camp or family group was the self-sufficient economic unit in traditional Dene society:

"...resources were distributed on the basis of reciprocity or mutual sharing. Generally speaking all participated equally in the good fortune of the hunters and all suffered equally when their luck turned bad." [Asch 1977:48]

A trapper who received goods or money for his commodity was not bound by the reciprocal sharing arrangements. His earnings were his own. Thus income differentiation was introduced and for the first time goods and services available to a few were not available to all.

Fur-trading proved to be a lucrative activity and there was a gradual shift within the Dene economy. Most people spent more time gathering furs. The standard of living was greatly improved. New commodities such as flour, sugar, blankets, cloth, metal tools and guns were introduced into the material culture of the Dene.

Little by little the Dene were drawn into the spiral of rising aspirations for the material benefits their commodity (furs) could buy. They also found it increasingly necessary to tailor their land-based activities to the demands of the market. For example, a high demand for beaver or muskrat pelts translated into a new configuration of time usage for Dene local bands. For example, less time might be spent in the spring caribou hunt, because it was profitable to hunt muskrat as soon as the waterways were clear of ice.

The most "adaptive" hunting and trapping methods became those that produced the greatest amount of saleable bush products for the greatest returns in trade goods. This meant that to compete with other hunters (a new value concept), a hunter needed a rifle, ammunition, steel traps, steel wire for snares, steel axes, knives and other implements, and in later years, an outboard motor (called a kicker). To get these things he had to produce on the trapline, which meant he (and his local band) spent less and less time gathering food.

Consequently a pattern of dependency upon certain food staples such as flour, sugar and tea crept into Dene lifeways, as well as the expectation that increased productivity in the fur-trapping sector of their economy would automatically bring a greater measure of economic security.

While the question of treaties will be dealt with in some detail in a later section, it will be helpful to note that at certain stages in this contact-traditional period, native people made direct appeals to the government for aid because of particularly harsh conditions brought on by hard winters and imported diseases. In 1873 Roderick Macfarlane, the clerk at Fort Chipewyan, wrote the following to his superiors in the Hudson Bay Company.

"Fon du Lac: Owing to an unprecedented scarcity of reindeer...the quantity of meat and grease furnished this summer is not a fourth of the amount yielded in ordinary years. While the fur hunt scarcely averaged $30.00 for each adult male...two Indians perished by starvation and 23 men, women and children were also carried off by epidemic..." [cited in Fumoleau 1977:31]

Northern historian Rene Fumoleau O.M.I., writes that the Hudson Bay Company always tried in limited ways to provide help for the Indians (for how could the entire fur extraction mechanism which was building the Hudson Bay empire continue without the Indians?). There are numerous records of company officials requesting direct government aid for the Mackenzie Valley Dene. "The Canadian government", Fumoleau writes, "did not feel it had any obligation toward a people with whom it did not have a formal agreement. Nor did the government see any purpose in making a treaty with Indians whose land was apparently of such little value." [Fumoleau 1977:31]

Life for the Dene had never been easy, though their hardships were unknown to any but their immediate neighbours until the white man came. Above all their culture had always valued pragmatic solutions to survival problems. When people realized that the edge could be taken off the razor-harsh existence they had always known through assistance from the Church, the Hudson Bay Company, or the Government it was only reasonable that they should try to get what they could. Over the years a view of Euro-Canadian culture was built up as a source of bounties (such as iron tools and guns). A part (though not all) of the Dene economy was already locked into the commodity market system and the dependency pattern implied by this relationship.

In 1883 two Chipewyan chiefs wrote directly to the Government to appeal for help.

"People who can trap furs and work are not too badly off, but many cannot work and really suffer. For such people we have to plead with you. You have previously supported us with twine to make fishnets, with gunpowder and lead balls,and we are very thankful to you. However it would be good if you could help them out also with some clothing material. Old women, old men, orphans, widows and their children have no clothes." [cited by Fumoleau 1977:32]

The Church, by this time a considerable force in the North, the Hudson Bay Company, and the Indians themselves repeatedly asked the Government to treat with the Mackenzie drainage Dene, so that they could come under the care of the Government.

Repeatedly this request was refused by the Government because, as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Thomas White wrote in 1887, treaties would only be made with Indians over land that was "required for settlement". He could see no reason to treat for lands that are "unexplored" and "unsuitable for agriculture". [cited by Fumoleau 1977:37]

In 1888 the Government decided to send token amounts ($20,000) of relief to the Dene. This was done through the agency of the Hudson Bay Company. The psychological implications of this gesture on the Dene vis-a-vis their relationship to the Hudson Bay Company and the market system in general were well understood, even at that time. The Government chief accountant complained:

"As these items of relief are undoubtedly used to maintain the allegiance of the Indians it follows that to a certain extent we are discriminating in the field of free trade in favor of the Hudson Bay Company. We do not recognize accounts from other traders. The true source of the supplies is concealed from the Indians, and the Hudson's Bay Company gets the benefit of the generosity of the Government." [cited in Fumoleau 1977:39]

In 1890 the news reached Ottawa that the North was "floating on oil". The government immediately began moves toward the initiation of treaty negotiations. It is important to note that the period of hardship which had plagued the Dene with disease and starvation for some thirty years immediately prior to 1890, plus the psychological dependency that had been built up as a result of the fur-trade and the relief assistance (however scanty) of Euro-Canadian agencies (church and trader) made the Dene particularly susceptible to offers of food rations and money which accompanied the Treaty.

Looking back at the survival record of the Dene in the north (10,000-14,000 years) one wonders if their entire history was checkered with periods of disease, scarcity and even starvation. While it is probable that there were periods of time when food was scarce it seems highly unlikely that the kinds and even the severity of hardships sustained by the Dene between 1850 and 1910 had ever occurred before.

"Prior to the expansion of the fur-trade into [Dene] territory there was no permanent settlement at all, the population... [followed] in their migration patterns those of the caribou, and though occasionally one or even a few individuals have perished, no stories or tales of protracted large scale periods of starvation have been passed on, which, in view of the fact that disasterous events among primitive people tend to become parts of their folklore, may be taken as prima facia evidence that such events did not take place."[Anders and Morissett 1969:51]

Diseases hitherto unknown to the Dene were imported by the Euro-Canadians, diseases to which the Athapaskans had no resistance. Between 1865 and 1867 nearly a thousand Indians are reported to have died of influenza in the Fort Simpson-Peel River area alone. Hundreds more perished from scarlet fever, measles or smallpox epidemics as well. Unfortunately documentation on epidemics "largely takes the form of occasional comments by persons untutored in medical diagnostic techniques who happened to be in a given region during an outbreak". [Allibond in Helm et al 1975:330]

It is thought that some 400 died in Fort Rae in 1859, that there was a scarlet fever epidemic among the southern Tutchoni about 1851, and that scarlet fever exterminated the Birch Creek Kutchin and Lower Yukon Kutchin between 1862 and 1867. [Ibid:332]

This apparent depopulation of the entire region could not but have had a devestating effect on Dene psychological and socio-economic patterns. It is reasonable to assume that most regional bands in the Mackenzie district lost between 25-50% of their population to diseases that were imported from southern Canada during the fifty years preceeding 1890.

Indeed, these epidemics continued long past the signing of treaties. Influenza and tuberculosis continued to kill hundreds and hundreds of Dene until as late as 1945 to 1950.

Interestingly, the hard demographic data for the Mackenzie Valley Dene covering the contact period does not support conjecture that any large scale population decrease actually occurred. In fact, despite the numerous accounts of deaths by disease and starvation from early historical records the population remained relatively stable between 1850 and 1950. In a careful and most insightful analysis of historical, anthropological and demographic data, June Helm accounts for this phenomenon with the following evidence and argument. [Helm 1980]

1.

The Dene are known to have practiced female infanticide. [Hardisty 1867:312, Keith 1890:11, Helm 1967, Gillespie 1971, Hayden 1972, Carlo 1978:25.] The net effect of this practise is thought to have been a "0" population growth by anthropologists who have studied the phenomenon in other societies. [Hayden 1972, Polgar 1972, Divale 1972, 1976] and it is presumed by Athapaskanists that the practice served as an adaptation measure for the Dene.

2.

Helm has calculated the Dene female infanticide rate to have been 22 of 100 females born, leaving 78 females to every 100 males in the population. [Helm 1980:270]

3.

Helm cites historical evidence to demonstrate that female infanticide was discouraged by the fur-traders and missionaries, that the practice was in fact stopped. Perhaps the reason why the practice was stopped can be explained on religious grounds, as most Dene converted to Catholicism. But the important fact is that by around 1850 the practice was stopped.

4.

Two important implications of the stopping of female infanticide should be noted: a. More women of child-bearing age were introduced into the demographic picture. This meant that more babies would be born. b. It also meant that the traditional male-female ratio was changed.

5.

Helm's conclusions infer that despite many deaths by disease, etc. enough additional babies were produced to hold the overall population to the same level over the entire contact-traditional period.

There are several other inferences that need to be drawn from these data. If the ratio of males to females changed in favour of females, the adaptation balance struck by the traditional demographic sex ratio was now upset. In other words, there were now proportionately fewer hunters to feed more dependents.

Though more research is needed into the precise survival needs of Dene local bands in traditional circumstances, I feel it safe to assume that this demographic shift may have contributed to the overall dependency pattern that was gradually established among Dene groups on store-bought foods. It may have become more practical to obtain food (at least at certain times) by exchanging it for furs than by hunting it.

Another important incursion into Dene lifeways was the reorganization of bush harvesting activities around fur collection. A bad year for furs meant hunger and even starvation for some Dene. Police patrols of 1897-99 reported:

"...a large number of Indians, both Crees and Chipewyan, living near Fort Chipewyan, are suffering from hunger on account of the small supply of furs..." [cited by Fumoleau 1977:55]

The report stated that many had died and many more were in "very destitute circumstances".

It is a fact that fur gathering did not play a significant role in the Dene economy before the advent of the fur-trader. Most energy and time was given over to the pursuit of game that would provide food, clothing and shelter for the local band. As has been described earlier, these activities were carried out in cooperation with other members of the band because that was the most efficient way to hunt or fish on a large scale. Trapping is a one, or at most a two man operation. The gradual shift of emphasis in Dene economic patterns from food gathering to fur gathering could not help but jeopardize survival chances of the Dene.

While beaver meat was eaten, muskrat, wolf, lynx and martin were not, so that well-being now dependend on splitting the time of the best hunters between fur gathering and food gathering. If fur gathering did not pay off in any given year, not only did the individual trapper suffer a loss in earnings but his entire local band risked starvation.

Michael Asch has argued [1974, 1976b, 1977] that fur gathering in no way changed the focus of Dene economic activities, because in the process of fur gathering food was obtained (beaver meat, as well as the occasional moose, caribou and other game). He says that the Dene were able to produce a surplus (furs) over and above their survival needs, and that it was this surplus that they traded with the white man.

This was probably the case in the beginning of the fur-trade era. Hudson Bay records reveal numerous schemes on the part of the traders to induce the Indians to produce more furs. The Dene at this stage clearly participated in the fur-trade in a discretionary manner, and were not in the least inclined to embark on a willy-nilly pursuit of profits. But gradually a shift did occur.

Asch's analysis does not account for the subtle but steady erosion of the pattern that was the yearly round of food gathering. By 1890 a large portion of the MacKenzie Dene were spending months at a time every year (usually summer) camped at various trading posts. It was due to this phenomenon that the census records Helm used in her work on

Dene demography [1980] were recorded in the first place.

By 1891 steamships travelled the Athapaskan and Mackenzie rivers bringing a virtual flood of trade goods. It was from about this point forward that the Dene began to wear Euro-Canadian store-bought clothes. Also around this time, by around 1875, local bands began constructing small cabins of logs around the rims of lakes and in other strategic hunting and fishing spots. [Helm 1961:4, 5, 6] There is one significant inference that can be drawn from this latter fact; a nomadic people for countless generations suddenly began, and (indeed it was only a beginning,) moving in the direction of establishing permanent settlements.

This tentative gesture in the direction of a major social change may well have provided an important stepping stone in Dene thinking. It should be underscored that families used these houses only when it was practical to do so, otherwise moving from camp to camp as before.

It is probable that the location of the permanent dwellings, selected as they were for both abundance of game and for reasonable and easy access to a trading post, served to increase the susceptibility of Dene groups to a dependency on imported goods, including foodstuffs that could be purchased with furs. Also, the argument Asch advances that trapping beaver was primarily food gathering (people ate the meat) and that the surplus (fur) were traded conflicts with what is known of traditional Dene food preferences. Moose, caribou and fish were the staples. While it is true the people would eat most animals they trapped, it is not likely that beaver was universally substituted for moose as though it didn't matter. Beaver trapping is primarily a spring and fall activity and overlaps the annual caribou migration times. Trapping is an individual activity. Hunting was generally done in groups. Clearly the fur-trade option necessitated some either-or economic choices for at least some Dene hunters.

A final consideration is that a hunter would have to trap an enormous amount of beaver to provide the meat needed to feed his local band. One beaver weighs 45-60 pounds. A moose weighs up to 1.400 pounds. That substitution of the sort Asch suggests was a readily acceptable option is doubtful.

There simply has not been enough accurate historical research to fill in the gap of information about this transition period in Dene history. But the assertion that Asch makes that the Dene were unaffected in their economic life by the presence of the traders and by their own participation in fur-trade activity simply does not bear the weight of careful scrutiny.

B. Treaty

In June of 1898 Canada's Privy Council stated (report No.1703) "that time has come when the Indian and Halfbreed population of [these] tracts of territory...should be treated with for the relinquishment of their claims to territorial ownership." [cited in Fumoleau 1977:56]

Accordingly treaty parties travelled throughout the northern part of Alberta, British Columbia and into the Territories as far as Lesser Slave Lake to "extinguish" the rights of the Indians to ownership and control of all lands in those areas.

Indian Commissioner Forget dismissed the notion of treating with the Indians north of those boundaries because "their territory so far as is at present known is of no particular value". [cited in Fumoleau 1977:59] This treaty became known as "Treaty 8" in 1899.

The basic concept of Treaty 8 (and its later counterpart called Treaty 11 which included the rest of the Mackenzie area) was that in exchange for a small cash settlement and promises of protection and assistance in times of need, as well as assurance that hunting, fishing and trapping rights would never be interferred with, the Dene were, in the words of the treaties themselves, to "Cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for Her Majesty the Queen and Her successors forever, all the rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the lands..." [from the text of Treaty 8 cited in Fumoleau 1977:61]
The treaty was to be signed with each group of Dene on their behalf by the respective chiefs of each band.

Because Commissioner Forget realized that "the northern native population was not any too well disposed to view favourably any proposition involving the cessation of the rights to their country [cited in Fumoleau 1977:65], the venerable and-well loved missionary Father Lacombe was requested to accompany the treaty parties in order to convince the Indians to sign. At first he refused, but the Prime Minister of Canada himself urged acceptance and so in the end he agreed "for the good of all". Father Lacombe accompanied the first treaty party. The next year another well-respected missionary, Father Breynot, went with the treaty party.

And so from post to post they travelled. The story of these negotiations have filled volumes. There were many tense moments when the Indians refused to sign until some assurance was given that their rights to continue living on the land as they had always done would not be jeopardized. There are numerous stories of discussions between the Indians and the treaty party that were only resolved through the intervention and assurances of the missionaries. There were many instances recorded in diaries and the treaty party reports of bands signing the treaty only after promises were made that their right to hunt, fish and live as they always had done would not be taken away.

It is highly doubtful that the Dene had any notion that they were "extinguishing" their rights to land or to sovereignty over their own lives.

The reasons why the treaties could not possibly have constituted a binding agreement between two parties (the

Indians and the Government) are so straightforward that they have been effectively argued and accepted as reasonable in a court of law (the Morrow decision in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories 1973). What follows is a summary of those arguments.

1. The text of the Treaty was written in a legal language that was quite simply beyond the grasp of the native people. English was at best a second language. Most of the native people were illiterate. The text was never translated into Athapaskan languages, nor, in most cases, was it even read in its entirety in English to the illiterate Dene who allegedly agreed to it.

2. Within the Dene world view, land cannot be bought, sold, exchanged, or owned. It can only be used. That the Dene were knowingly giving up their rights to the land is absurd in that in almost every instance, the treaty parties were obliged to assure the Indians that no change could come to Indian land-use patterns. "Ownership" of the land, in the Euro-Canadian sense of the term was never raised as an issue. Nor was it a concept that was even understood by the Dene who "signed" the treaty.

3. The "chiefs" that "signed" the treaty were, for the most part selected by the treaty parties, not the Dene. Within Dene concepts of government no one can "speak for" the others unless concensus has been reached. The Dene did not have a chief and band structure until it was imposed for administrative purposes by the Government.

4. Fumoleau [1977] and Berger [1977] document interesting testimonies of Dene who actually witnessed the signing of one of the treaties. In numerous instances the "signitoree" was illiterate, though his name is written out in the same deliberate hand that penned many of the other signatures. In more than one case the "signitoree" was not even present at the treaty signing.

5. In the minds of the Indians and even the missionaries [see Fumoleau 1977:81 & 82] what was agreed to was a "friendship treaty" - something which fitted well within Dene tradition. To the Dene way of thinking, it was agreed that the Dene and non-Dene could share the use of the land as long as the whites did not interfere with Dene lifeways.

6. Often the final weight tipping the scale towards agreeing to sign the treaties was Government promises that the people would never be left to starve or without medical help again.

There are numerous documented instances which demonstrate that Dene lifeways were indeed interfered with after the treaties were "signed". Game laws were imposed complete with prison sentences for violation. Schooling was imposed. Eventually a complete breakdown and reorganization of Dene life into settlements was carried out. Treaty 8 was signed in 1899-1900. Treaty 11 was introduced in much the same manner and for the same reason (oil) in 1921. Bishop Breynat expressed his indignation at the heavy-handed manner in which the Government conducted the "negotiations" for Treaty 11.

"The Royal Commission arrived from Ottawa to negotiate with them [the Indians] the terms of the Treaty, which terms were prepared in advance to be imposed upon them rather than freely discussed in a spirit of reconciliation and mutual concessions..." [cited by Fumoleau 1977:163]

Yet the same duplicity that marked the Government's behaviour in 1899-1900 dominated the 1921 negotiations. Fumoleau cites the testimony of people who were present when the treaty party went through Arctic Red River.

"Julian Andre: They [the Indians] said, 'This is our land, we were born here, it is our land and no one will take it away from us'. This white man [Conroy] and a Hudson Bay clerk [Parsons?] told us...'This land is your land as long as you live and no one will take it from you'. The people said, 'Are you sure no one will take this land?' and the white people said, 'Yes, we will not take your land'." [1977:184]

Despite government promises of help in the area of medical needs, food relief and education, it was in fact the churches that provided the large bulk of these services up until the 1950's with very little support from the Government.

In 1919-1920 the fur prices were the best they had been in years. White trappers came to the Mackenzie district in waves and completely unmindful of conservation imperatives or to traditional native land usage, began a wholesale extraction of furs which was to seriously deplete fur-bearing animal populations. The Government did little or nothing to protect the Indians during this time. Prices descended gradually on the world fur market. There were several market drops but the most crushing took place immediately after World War II.

This drop was accompanied by an unprecedented rise in the cost of staple goods. As a result the Dene were forced to turn to other cash sources in order to obtain the trade goods they had now grown so acccustomed to. These sources amounted to government transfer monies of various sorts including family allowance, old age pension and later, welfare.

Government money permitted the Dene their land-based activities of hunting and gathering while enjoying at least limited access to trade goods. It is interesting to ask what might have been the consequences for the Dene if no such money had been provided. Would the Dene have then returned to their traditional economic patterns? There is considerable recent evidence to suggest that this may be so. [Berger 1977]

What did occur resulted in the continuation of a dual economic structure. On the one hand, the resources obtained from bush subsistence activities were shared in the traditional way. On the other hand, cash obtained from the

Government was treated in much the same way as were the monies earned from fur-trading. Money was allocated to individuals or heads of households. Those receiving income from this source tended not to share these resources with the rest of the community.

This continuation of the dual economic structure has had profound consequences for the Dene. It is here that we may find the roots of the major internal obstacles the Dene face in their struggle for self-determination and self-reliance.

Michael Asch comments:

"The introduction of welfare payments in their present form created the individualization of poverty and helped to relieve the community of the traditional responsibility to help one another. This then led to the undermining of the values of collective responsibility which are a part of the reciprocal economy and subtlely led to the forced acceptance of the value of individual responsbility which is characteristic of our economy." [Asch 1977:48]

It must be pointed out that this erosion process did not significantly change the land-based lifestyle or thinking of the majority of Dene people before 1950. It is argued by the Dene as well as those who have studied them [Helm and Leacock 1971, Helm 1975, Jones 1976, Sharpe 1976, Asch 1977, Fumoleau 1977] that even into the 1960's the Dene society was able to preserve intact the bulk of it's traditional value structure, kinship patterns and economy.

In the 1960s the Dene were subjected to an armada of pressure, both economic and political, to abandon their traditional lifestyle and to move into established townsites. These pressures included a food shortage, a need for medical care, a compulsory schooling law and threats that government money would be cut off if the Dene did not comply. Michael Asch describes some of the consequences of this move:

"The movement of people away from residence at fish lake encampments and the introduction of direct family allowance payments, old age pensions, and other cash benefits directly to nuclear family heads and individuals completely undermined the economic rationale of the local group. Thus beginning no later than 1960 the nuclear family typically composed of an older married couple and their adult and younger children, became the primary self-sufficient economic unit." [Ibid]

There are now twenty-five communities in the Northwest Territories with populations ranging from about fifty to approximately fifteen hundred people (discounting the towns of Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik). Despite a proliferation of the white civil service to enormous proportions (a subject we will discuss in the context of Dene political development in a later section) native people still constitute a substantial majority of the population of the Northwest Territories.

It was undoubtedly the hope of the Canadian Government and the church that the move to settlements would set the Dene well on the path to "modernization" and "development". And to many of the Dene people, besieged as they were after World War II with economic, legal, health and social problems, the change to settlement life appeared as a hopeful dawn after a long dark night. It looked to many as though it was actually going to be possible to achieve the degree of economic security and social well-being that the white man's society promised was waiting for the Dene people at the end of the road to modernity.

What remained to be learned was that this vision of a "modern" future for the Dene, a future that was to be a cookie-cutter copy of Euro-Canadian society, was as much an unattainable mirage for the Dene as it had proven to be for the African, the Asiatic and the South American peoples who had been presented with virtually the same set of promises.

III. The Modernization Mirage

A. The Dene and Modernization

In the final report of the MacKenzie Valley Pipe Line Inquiry, Thomas Berger felt it important to distinguish between two kinds of northern development: one based on the assumption that the expansion of the industrial sector and southern Canadian government forms would "modernize" the North, including the Dene, and would bring prosperity and well-being to all the other based on the assumption that northern development means development of northern peoples and begins in a process of growth out of the culture, values and aspirations of those people moving toward goals that the people participate in setting for themselves. [Berger 1977, Vol 2:4,]

There is no doubt that the government felt it was doing the native people of the MacKenzie district a great favour by establishing settlements, for in this way services (education, health care, etc.) and administration could be centralized. Also in this way, it was felt that native people would begin to assimilate the socio-cultural and economic values that would enable them to participate in the "mainstream"of Canadian society.

In other words, it was believed that a relatively primitive, traditional people would be much better off if they were to become "modern". It was felt that this "development" could best be engineered if Dene children went to Canadian schools and if Dene men worked at Canadian "jobs" to earn a "living" for their families.

The central issue of this entire thesis may be expressed in the question, "What would constitute authentic "development" and genuine "progress" for the Dene people?". Revolving around this central question is a constellation of problems such as determining who the Dene were, who they are now, in what direction development should take their society, and what strategies would be appropriate considering the obstacles the Dene face in the path of their "authentic" development.

The model of development that modern industrial states have exported all over the third world as the "correlate" of human progress is termed the "modernization" approach in development studies literature.

Before examining what happened to the Dene when they moved into settlements, thus giving us a clearer picture of who the Dene are today, it will be most instructive to examine, from a more theoretical stance, the whole question of modernization. We need to determine whether the program of development foisted upon the Dene people after World War II (much as it was foisted upon Southern American and African people) could in fact lead to the genuine progress of the Dene people from their own viewpoint. We can only assume that everyone involved in engineering the Dene move into settlements (the government, the church and many Dene themselves) believed that for the Dene, assimilation and modernization (in southern Canadian terms) equalled "development".

In my view, the Dene are the victims of an historical process: the colonization of the North by southern Canada. This instrusion was motived by the capitalist market's need for basic commodities. Two staple products have been key in Canada's North: fur, which attracted early entrepreneurs and the production of which locked the Dene into the global market system; and oil, which may yet incite cultural genocide against the Dene, or which may insure a secure future for all native northerners. Another important though less controversial staple revenue is mined metals.

Ethno-historical evidence presented thus far in this thesis delineates a pattern of colonial incursion and domination which interrupted the flow of Dene social, cultural, and economic life and sent Dene society into a downward spiral of dependency, disease, starvation, alienation, powerlessness and frustration. In a word, the Dene are a victim of a process of underdevelopment. Their situation has been worsened because not only have they been rendered mendicants in a land where they were previously self-sufficient for at least 10,000 years, but also they have been uprooted culturally, leaving them confused and disoriented. What is more, their children are taught that the blame for this state of affairs rests on the Dene themselves; that the "old ways" are dead and that the only salvation is to step into the "modern" world of southern

Canadian society.

Thirty years later this mirage called modernization no longer seems so appealing or even attainable to many native people.

The Dene are one of many peoples all over the world that have fallen victim to one kind of under-development or another; and who have been offered the carrot-on-a-stick of modernization by the very people whose activities did much to create their dilemma in the first place. Canada's North fits neatly into the category of a third-world colony within a nation state. It has not achieved (and may never achieve) political independence, but aside from that important distinction, there is very little to say against such a classification. [Watkins 1977:84]

The nature of the relationship between the Dene in the North and the nation state of Canada is a classic colonial relationship in that

"Once European (Euro-Canadian in this case) soveriegnty had been establisdhed over various parts of the world, each European colonial power regarded the affairs of the colonized area as "domestic" and internal. This meant that indigenous rights were to be governed solely by the political and legal system of the particular colonial power." [Sanders 1977:5]

Development theory is ostensibly an analytical response to the real world phenomenon of underdevelopment. For the modernization theorists and many Marxists the term "underdevelopment" is used to describe the condition of a society that has not yet entered the arena of industrial "progress". For the neo-marxists and expecially the dependency theorists the term is used as a transitive verb, as in "we underdeveloped them". [Rodney 1972, Frank 1969a] No matter which ideological spectacles are donned in order to peer over the edge of "civilization" into the harsh reality that is the so-called "third world", the objective condition of that world and of the lives of the people who live in it ought to remain the central problem under consideration. The resolution of the problems posed by that objective reality ought to be the "raison d'etre" of development studies.

In the words of Julius Nyrere:
"...development has a purpose; that purpose is the liberation of man. It is true that in the Third World we talk a great deal about economic development--about expanding the number of goods and services, and the capacity to produce them. But the goods are needed to serve man; services are required to make the lives of men more easeful as well as more fruitful. Political, social and economic organization is needed to enlarge the freedom and dignity of man. Always we come back to Man--to liberated man--as the purpose of activity, the purpose of development." [Nyerere 1976]

It is the high cost of underdevelopment to man that ought to remain the pivotal issue in discussions about the process of development. A substantial portion of the writing about underdevelopment from thinkers representing a variety of ideological schools tends to hold the peasant and his society squirming at arms length between antiseptic theoretical tweezers while a polite discussion is conducted on why it is, or how it came to be, that this specimen of humanity has fallen victim to such unfortunate circumstances.

> "It matters little how much information we possess about development if we have not grasped its inner meaning.
>
> Underdevelopment is shocking: the squalor, disease, unnecessary deaths, and hopelessness of it all! No man understands if underdevelopment remains for him a mere statistic reflecting low income, poor housing, premature mortality, or underemployment...the prevalent emotion of underdevelopment is a sense of personal and societal impotence in the face of disease and death, of confusion and ignorance as one gropes to understand change, of servility toward men whose decisions govern the course of events, of hopelessness before hunger and natural catastrophe... One cannot understand how cruel that hell is merely by gazing upon poverty as an object." [Goulet 1977:23]

These circumstances and their elimination as causal agents of suffering in the lives of underdeveloped peoples will be employed, in this paper, as criteria for evaluating the usefulness of a major body of development thinking known as the neo-classical or modernization theory. Whether a theory is internally consistent, whether it is based in historical perspective, whether it matches certain ideological requirements, whether its methodological approach is questionable, whether it gives enough emphasis to economic factors, or social factors, or political factors or to the role of values and attitudes in development, all of these considerations, it will be argued, are eclipsed in importance by a single quintessential factor, namely the extent to which the theory in question is able to contribute practical solutions to the human dilemma of underdevelopment.

This challenge may be divided into categories which I shall present in the form of questions for purposes of evaluation. In each case the question should be prefaced in the reader's mind by the phrase, "when the theory is applied in an attempt to understand a particular society(ies)...".

1. Definitions - Does the theory adequately describe the conditions of life that are intolerable for man and for the society? Does it convey the objective as well as the subjective reality of underdevelopment?

2. Objectives and Goals - Does the theory tell us what direction development should take? In other words, after describing what is "bad" does it proceed to tell us what "good" would be? This is necessary because we begin with an intolerable objective reality that is underdevelopment. "Development" necessarily implies an improvement upon that

condition. We need to know exactly what that development would consist of in order to determine appropriate development strategies. Are the implications for man of this proposed new direction made explict? Are these implications desirable?

3. Obstacles to development - Does the theory correctly identify the obstacles that stand in the path of development? Does it help us to understand why the present condition exists and what forces are operating to maintain or worsen that condition? We need to know this in order to untangle the "victim" from the web of his "unfortunate circumstance" so that he can proceed to make the necessary "improvements" which would lead to "development".

4. Strategies - Does the theory provide strategies and tactics for dealing with or removing the obstacles to development? Are these suggestions and their concomitant implications likely to contribute to the solution or to the problem? Are they practical?

Before proceeding to apply these questions as criteria for evaluating the usefulness of the development theory to be considered, it is important to delineate, however sketchily, for purposes of emphasis to our central theme, those conditions of life in underdeveloped societies which constitute the body of problems to be tackled by development theorists and practitioners.

Here is a partial listing of problems common to most, if not all, underdeveloped contries:

1. Chronic Disease

People expect sickness and death, and do not understand the sources of disease. Medical personnel, clinics, and medicines are unsufficient in numbers, low in quality, or non-existent. Some five million children die each year in poor countries before they reach their first birthday. Prior to 1949, an estimated four million people died each year in China from contamination by human excrement. [De Castro 1952:29, 151]

2. Hunger and Malnutrition

Not only are there gross shortages of food, reducing peasants to eating once a day or even once every two days in many countries, but the World Health Organization estimates that upwards of 45 per cent of all deaths from all causes in the third world are directly or indirectly related to malnutrition.

3. Famine

Charles Wilber [Wilber 1978:334] states that during the last 2000 years the Chinese suffered 1829 famines, killing countless millions of people. Ten major famines in India between 1860 and 1900 killed another 15 million people. In Central Africa people count time from famine to famine, as in "I was born the year before such and such a famine" (famines are given names like hurricanes).

4. Premature Death

In our society the life expectancy is 77 years for women and 74 years for men. Most lesser developed countries have a life expectancy of less than 45 years and in some countries the figure drops as low as 35 years.

5. The Degradation of the Human Spirit

Denis Goulet lists esteem, defined as a "man's sense that he is a being of worth, that he is respected, that others are not using him as a tool to attain their purposes without regards for his own purposes" [Goulet 1977:89] as one of three major goals for development. The intrusion of more "modern" societal forms and values, of new economic modes, and of new political systems have undermined the integrity of nearly every "traditional" society on earth. What made a man a man in times past has now been relegated to the trash heap of disregarded, irrelevant, and outmoded customs. Modern underdeveloped man is left hopeless and impotent to fight the forces that make and keep him poor.

There are many other "conditions" in lesser developed countries that need addressing. These include: anomie; a rash of social pathologies such as alcoholism, violence, family breakdown and suicide; the collapse of traditional value structures with no coherent replacement system; extremes of wealth in the hands of a few, and extremes of poverty on the shoulders of the many; illiteracy; unemployment and underemployment; run-away inflation; etc., etc.

These are some of the conditions which development theorists must address. Bearing them in mind, let us now turn to the task of evaluating the usefulness of a major approach to the problem of underdevelopment--the neoclassical or modernization theory of development. The aim will be to delineate the central thrust of the theoretical approach so that the usefulness of the theory can be assessed according to the criteria described above. We shall then proceed to apply those criteria.

B. The Modernization School

Adam Smith was a Scottish moral and economic philosopher who felt so confident that the Hand of Providence was guiding the affairs of men that he did not hesitate to separate moral philosophy from economics. The publication of The Wealth of Nations in 1776 gave rise to a new trend in Western thought, which was to become the philosophical underpinnings as well as the basic rationale of capitalism. Smith's doctrine was modified and abstracted further from the context of moral life by theoreticians after him, though its essential premise remained intact. John Gurley has effectively summarized the theory as follows: an economy can develop most efficiently and rapidly if "every person, whether as entrepreneur, worker or consumer is able to pursue his own self-interest in competitive markets without undue interference from government." [Gurley in Wilber 1978:334] Within this model it is the entrepreneurs, and not the government, who promote progress. These entrepreneurs own the material means of production, and their activities "guided by the profit motive, reflect consumer demands for various goods and services" [Gurley Ibid]. The measure of economic attainment is national output.

As Sunkel points out [Sunkel 1977], the focus of economic thought before 1950 was the development of western industrialized nations and their respective world raw materials and market systems. It was only as third world colonial structures crumbled and the industrialized nations were forced to seek new forms of relationships with their sources of raw materials and their markets that references began to appear in social science literature, particularly economics and sociology, to the economic and (only contingently) social problems of countries "not yet" industrialized by that time.

It was then that Truman's Point IV Program and the U.N. Technical Assistance Programs launched the Western world's good ship lollipop of foreign "aid". The cynicism with which this was carried out is indicated in a statement made to U.S. Senate foreign relations committee by U.S. AID officials in 1961 which stated, in no uncertain terms, that "our presence in underdeveloped countries is chiefly aimed at the cultivation of American economic and political interests".

Still, in all fairness, it was believed that the by-product of this "cultivation" would be the development of the host country. Strategically, the package deal offered to the newly independent states had to offer the promise of development. The following theoretical framework was presented, over time, as a packaged conceptualization of what development is, how it must take place, and where it will lead developing countries.

The modernization approach may be divided into three conceptual packages:

1.

The Linear-Development concept

2.

The Index Method

3.

The Diffusion Theory

We will briefly describe each of these.

Linear Development

This conceptualization posits that all societies on earth will, given the proper stimulus and under certain loosely-defined conditions, develop in exactly the same way as had Western industrialized Europe and North America. The idea of stages of development was offered by Comte, Marx and others in the 18th and 19th centuries. W.W. Rostow [Rostow 1962] posited a conflict-free continuum of motion from traditional society to developed industrial society. His linear development model suggested five stages: a. the traditional stage, b. the transitional stage (getting ready to develop), c. Take-off (to independent sustained growth), d. the drive to maturity, and e. the age of high mass consumption.

Economic growth is directly equated with "development". Accordingly an increase in G.N.P. is believed to be a healthy step along the road to well-being. The shining white Camelot at the summit of the road (rocky though that road may be) is the achievement record of European or American capitalistic, industrialized society. Indeed, it is a very attractive model to those who suffer from the crushing reality of underdevelopment, in that it promises adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and eventually, personal liberties to all.

S.N. Eisenstadt, a leading modernization thinker, [Eisenstadt 1974] identifies four assumptions of the linear development approach:

1.
the belief that there is a necessary co-variance in the rates of change of institutions within a developing society;

2.
the assumption that the development process leading to modernization is irreversible;

3.
the conviction that after "take-off" the patterns of societal change will become regularized, less disruptive and less painful; that a continuity of change will prevail;

4.
convergence - the assumption that modernization will lead all societies in the same direction, and to the same goals and achievements.

Having offered a general description of how any society could advance, the modernization theorists proceeded to identify indices for measuring a particular society's potential and progress on the road to development.

The Index Method

Manning Nash describes the method: "the general features of a developed economy are abstracted as an ideal type and then contrasted with the equally typical features of a poor economy and society". [Nash cited by Frank 1969b:22] This method led to the Kindleberger equation [Kindleberger cited by Frank 1969b:24] described by Andre Gunder Frank thus: "you subtract the ideal typical features or indices of underdevelopment from those of development, and the remainder is your development program". ?Frank 1969b:24]

The assumption here is that underdevelopment is an original state, and that prior to Western intrusion, that state had maintained itself in more or less the same pre-historic condition from out of the dim reaches of time. This state is considered to be fairly uniformly manifested in all "traditional" societies. Hence "traditional" societies can be classified, despite the obvious variety of cultural, language, environmental, and social-economic differences. The most commonly used classification system was developed by Talcot Parsons [Parsons 1951] in his now almost universally accepted (in North America) systems theory approach to social structure. These classifications are called "pattern variables". Bert Hoselitz [Hoselitz, cited by Frank 1969b:24] took Parsons' pattern variables and applied them to economic development and socio-cultural change. The classification system resulting from this dubious enterprise may be summarized as follows:

Traditional Society vs *Modern Society*

1.

ascription vs achievement

2.

particularism vs universalism

3.

difffuseness vs specificity

4.

affectivity vs affective neutrality

5.

collective orientation vs self-orientation

The generalization drawn from category 1 (ascription vs achievement), for example, is that in traditional societies roles and rewards are likely to be given to individuals according to their ascribed worth, determined by their membership by birth in a particular tribe, family, caste or interest group. The position in society ascribed to the group is automatically transfered to the individual members of the group. By contrast, in "modern" societies, it is argued that roles and rewards are bestowed on those who merit them by virtue of their achievements. So it goes for all the categories. A modern man thinks like Adam Smith and thus behaves in an achievement oriented, universalistic, specific, affectively neutral, self-orientated manner.

We thus have a model of the "modern man" and more to the point, "traditional man" has a model of modern man.

The next problem for the modernization thinker is how to transform a society from "traditional" to "modern". The Kindleberger equation mentioned above only tells us what is missing. It is in fact called the gap approach. What it does not tell us how to fill the gap.

The Diffusion Theory

The way this is to be accomplished--filling the gap, i.e. the dynamic element in the modernization theory--is by a diffusion of "knowledge, skills, organization, values, technology and capital to a poor nation until, over time, its society, culture and personnel become variants of that which made the Atlantic community economically successful". [Nash in Frank 1969, Lerner 1958]

Within the poor country itself, say the modernizationists, there exists a dual socio-economic structure: the modern sector and the traditional sector. By developing the modern sector, the benefits will "trickle down" into the traditional sector. Gradually the former will expand until it entirely ingulfs the latter. This desirable expansion will bring with it a better standard of living, higher levels of education and health care, as well as general prosperity and contentment.

We must remember that many, if not all of the underdeveloped countries had contact with capitalist societies as far back as the 15th century. In each country there exists a small enclave of better educated, wealthy, politically ambitious elite who owe their prosperity to a longstanding association with the European presence in that country. These western-educated individuals typically live in the urban centers and are the power structure of the newly-emergentt nation. Among the Dene these select few have never held power because of the colony-within [Watkins 1977] status of northern Canada.

The modernization theorists argue that the development of this "entrepreneurial class" or "modernized elite" to model the attitudes and values of "the modern man" and to work for the "right sort" of reforms within the country is essential to the diffusion process. This is to be accompanied by an infusion of new technology, education, and skill training, western organizational models and political practice as well as raw capital.

It is then argued that by promoting industrial developement, as well as raw material extraction operations on an industrial scale, capital will be generated that can be accumulated for further investment leading to an upward spiraling development of the economy. As more and more money enters the economy generated by these activities, more and more industrial centers can be opened and the prosperity that is initially confined to a few urbanized "elite" will be available to everyone.

C. Critique:

We have just completed the third U.N. development decade (1. 1950-60, 2. 1960-70, 3. 1970-80). At the end of the first decade it was realized that something was wrong. Though most under-developed countries showed gains in G.N.P., some of them fairly significant gains, there was little evidence to show that the condition of the rural poor in those countries had improved. If anything, the gap between rich and poor had widened. Since in most developing countries, the "traditional" sector accounts for between 85-97% of the entire population, the "trickle down" aspect of the modernization approach needed concerted encouragement.

It was decided that the key was education, so vast amounts of money and human resources were poured into the expansion of schooling opportunities during the second development decade. Naturally the formal education systems modeled after European or American schools was thought to be the appropriate tool for modernizing the traditional sector.

As the second U.N. Development decade drew to a close (1970), development practitioners were faced with a situation that had been worsened, not bettered, by the influx of western money, technology, values and aspirations. Problems included the rural-to-urban drift, and the emergence, on a large scale, of shack cities on the borders of urban centers. Along with this came shocking increases in crime rates, especially violent crimes, family breakup, alcoholism and a host of other social pathologies. As well, there was the increasing problem of the educated unemployed or underemployed.

People had flocked to the cities in hopes of being "engulfed" in the modern elite sector. Reasons for this are varied but, in the words of Henry Bernstein,

"a primary factor in the displacement of people from the rural areas and their consequent migration to the urban shanty towns is the widespread encroachment of nationalized capitalist production and/or marketing systems into peasant agriculture within the framework of laissez-faire agricultural policies". [Bernstein 1970:152]

As well, many had been educated only to find that the number of positions available for people with European-type education was very limited. Those who controlled access to those jobs were well aware that the cake is only so big and to divide it even further is to lessen the size of each portion.

It was also learned that formal education had produced individuals who could quote Shakespeare or Voltaire but would not soil their hands in agricultural work--could not in fact do anything to assist the nation's development efforts except to work as teachers, clerks, or functionnaires in the modern sector. Meanwhile the gap between rich and poor had widened even further.

At the end of the third decade (1980), it is difficult to point to a single country in the entire underdeveloped world (except for the socialist block) that has achieved anything like the development modernization theory promised would occur by following the modernization doctrine.[7] It is safe to say that after 30 years and billions of dollars in investment in "aid" programs whose general framework was the modernization approach, there exists in have-not countries of the world:

1. a greater gap between the rich and the poor
2. more hunger
3. more disease
4. more social and political instability and upheaval (a necessary requisite to the linear development of the modernizationists is order and stability. Hence in the name of development, American troops were sent to squelch

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[7] Some would argue that South Korea and Formosa are notable exceptions. While it is true that G.N.P. in these countries has increased and that the standard of living of the average citizen has improved, it is also true that for specific military and politically- strategic reasons, these countries have been so completely tied (structurally) to the United States to justify placing them in the category of dependent territories rather than emergent nation states. The appalling human rights records of these countries indicates the human cost of such "development".

insurrections in countries receiving aid.)

5.

more squalor

6.

more unnecessary deaths

7.

more feelings of hopeless impotence to effect meaningful change

8.

less dignity for the average individual

We could go on and on. The point is, of course, that something is terribly wrong. Underdevelopment continues. So does the overwhelming prevalence of modernization assumptions, not among development theorists so much as among the generals of the military, the captains of industry and the lieutenants of government in the Western world. It is from these centers of power that the money and technical assistance supposedly continue to flow to third world countries. Yet there are considerable data establishing that the net flow is actually from poor to rich and not rich to poor. [Frank 1969a, Bornschier et al 1978] The meager evidence thus far presented in this chapter suggests that development (in modernization terms) is not occurring as expected and that a reassessment may be in order.

D. Evaluation:

Let us now apply the four sets of criteria suggested in the beginning of this chapter in an attempt to evaluate the usefulness of the overall modernization approach. In the process we shall attempt to determine why things have gone as they have in the "developing" countries despite massive development efforts.

The First Criterion - Defining the Problem

Our first set of criteria may be summarized by means of the following question: Does the modernization theory adequately describe the conditions of life that are intolerable for man and for society in an underdeveloped country? In other words, does it convey the objective and subjective reality of underdevelopment? Does it correctly define the problem of underdevelopment?

The definition of the problem, within the modernization framework, is that the economy of a poor country is underdeveloped because of the preponderance of "traditional" sector values, practices, and characteristics. It is assumed that prosperity is concomitant with modernity and that it is prosperity that will alleviate any problems the society may be having, such as food shortages or the proliferation of disease. The central problem, then, is seen to be how to expand the modern sector of the economy so that it encompasses the entire society.

What we have seen in "developing" countries such as Peru, Argentina, Chile, Nigeria, Zaire, Thailand, India, Pakistan and many others is a forward march of the economy (as measured by increases in G.N.P.) but little improvement or even deterioration of the living conditions of the majority of people who live in those countries.

By defining the central problem of underdevelopment in terms of the economy, Western nations have reflected their own interests (which are decidedly economic) in developing countries and have overlooked the most fundamental development issue of all - the predicament of underdeveloped man. Had they chosen to define the problem of underdevelopment in terms of the intolerable and often shocking conditions that pervade the life of people in poor countries, it is probable (assuming a genuine interest in development) that urban industrialization would have been the last goal, and not the first, of development efforts.

Certainly, an investor finds it easier to work with those educated elite who speak his language, share similar aspirations and values, and will act in his interest (in that they correctly perceive their own interests to be linked with those of the investor). And certainly, governments of developed countries are more or less bound to advance the interests of their own business and industrial sectors. But by defining these activities as "development", the modernization thinkers have blatantly inferred that American or European economic and political interests are consonant with or identical to the economic and political interests of third world countries. To accept this assumption would mean concurrence, for example, with the notion that colonialization was in the best interests of colonialized peoples.

Susanne Bodenheimer has effectively argued that the Western (particularily American) social sciences have carried on a masquerade of "pseudo-scientific objectivity". She proposes that the dominant theories employed by American social scientists (especially Keynsian economics and Parsonsian sociology) are "very specific to certain American intersts..." [Bodenheimer 1970:108] which are inspired by economic concerns for capital accumulation and an anti-marxist philosophy. An example of the application of this may be found in U.S.-Latin American or Asian relations, wherein extremely repressive regimes are propped up by American money and military might, and where insurrections are put down in the name of maintaining "stability" and law and order, which are said to be requisite conditions of modernization. Ideological conflict is seen as "anti-politics" and "on the individual level the ideological dissenter is reduced to the status of a psychological deviant". [Bodenheimer 1970:109]

Thus, by defining the central problem of development as the transformation of the economy and not the transformation of the people and their living conditions, the stage is set for a wholesale pursuance of the economic interests of those who presently hold power at the expense of those who do not. If the have-nots protest they are branded as "anti-development" or as dangerous "deviants", or even as "terrorists".

It becomes evident that this definition of the problem opens the door to structural inequalities and, eventually, to out-right oppression. Those international agencies who still choose to place the reins of "development" in the hands of the "model elite" are assuring a continuation of the status quo in underdeveloped countries. This, Susan Bodenheimer argues, is why structural functionalism has persisted as a theory despite its obvious inadequacies.

Traditional versus Modern

We have said that the modernization theory proposes that the economy is the object of development. The problem of development is perceived to be the task of moving a society from "traditional" to "modern" on Hoselitz's index scale. [See Frank 1969b:24] The classification system employing Parsonian pattern variables as indices of measurement to place societies on the continuum from traditionality to modernity has been attacked by various authors as ahistorical, inaccurate, misleading, and simply not representative of conditions in the real world.

Reinhardt Bendix traces the historical roots of the 19th century European sociological tradition to which modern social science theories owe so much:

"We owe many insights to this intellectual tradition. Yet...this perspective gave an oversimplified view of traditional societies, of modern societies, and of the transition from the one to the other." [Bendix 1967:239] It is the polar dichotomization of these two extremes that Bendix attacks as being rigid and ahistorical. He shows how this "invidious contrast between tradition and modernity is the master theme" [Bendix 1967:295] underlying capitalist political and economic thought since the 1700s. Following Daniel Lerner, there have been many contemporary efforts to classify these polarized traits despite, in Lerner's own words, the fact that "people don't do what, in any rational course of behavior, they should do". [Lerner 1958:preface] In other words, the real behavior of real people does not conform to Lerner's model. Rather than change the model, the behavior is labelled deviant, or irrational, or even pathological.

What we are talking about is a definition of the problem of development. If we define the problem in terms of an ideal type that distorts and totally misrepresents reality, it is highly unlikely that development strategies following from a definition will contribute to the solving of the human dilemma of underdevelopment.

Andre Gunder Frank presents a decisive array of evidence to show that the pattern-variable classification is simply not useful in attempting to distinguish between underdeveloped and developed societies. In a masterful exposition of data and facts he shows how all of the traits on both sides of the polarity (ascription vs achievement, particularistic vs universalistic, etc.) are found in profusion in both "highly advanced" societies such as the United States and "extremely backwards" ones such as Argentina, Chile and Brazil. [Frank 1969b]

Another aspect of the modernization mis-definition of the problem of underdevelopment, and also embedded in the notion of traditional vs modern, is the assumption that underdeveloped "traditional" societies represent an original state of socio-cultural existence. In other words, before Euro-American intrusion, there was no social change, no advance, and no development. Thus "underdevelopment" to modernizationists means the same as "undeveloped".

This view has been challenged by many writers and will be taken up in more detail in the following sections. For the present it is enough to say that so-called traditional societies were in process of development, and that their development was interrupted and effectively blocked by the intrusion of European or other capitalist economic forms. These forms were accompanied by a pattern of dominance so insidious that they were barely affected at all by the so-called process of "decolonization".

Nowhere in the modernization theory's definition of the problem of development, or in the sea of theoretical constructs that follow from that definition, do we find a simple definition of the plight of the underdeveloped man; that he is poor, that he is sick, that he is oppressed, and that his intolerable condition may well be a concomitant of the "developed" condition of other men.

Because the definition of the problem has not been man-centered, the process of modernization has historically bypassed the underdeveloped man, leaving his society in ruins, changing his aspirations, and subjecting him to unspeakable degradation.

The Second Criterion - The Goals of Development

Does the theory tell us what direction development should take? Does it suggest what "good" or "developed" would be after describing what is "bad" or "underdeveloped"? What are the implications for man of the proposed new direction that development will take the society?

Modernization has been understood by western social scientists and policy makers as the process of change towards those types of social economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the 17th to the 19th century, and which now characterize modern industrialized society.

In all fairness, modernization theory does indeed tell us what direction it would have development take a society. The direction is toward modernity. What is modernity? Modernity is the condition of Western capitalist, industrialized societies, particularly the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

Whether this goal is achievable or even desirable is quite another matter.

If the modernization dream is like an exotic mirage in the sky--always out of reach, always melting--then it is not a very useful or practical goal for underdeveloped peoples. And if the achievement of modernization brings with it the social pathologies of modern urban society (and it is clear from examples as far flung as Yellowknife, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, and Hong Kong that it does) then perhaps those societies which still have some measure of choice within their grasp about their own development are well advised to consider other alternatives.

Though the second point, the desirability of modernization, is perhaps a more interesting philosophical inquiry, we shall briefly take up the first question, whether the goal posed by modernization is in fact an achievable objective for underdeveloped peoples in today's world, because it is this question that is central to our theme: namely the human dilemma of underdevelopment. If a society is mobilized to strive for an unachievable goal, its time is wasted, its hopes eventually dashed, its aspirations and frustrations are aroused and its resistence to future change efforts galvanized. The mathematics of human suffering in poor countries is a multipliccation of problems proliferating geometrically. Hence, time lost to the task of solving the real problems permits a serious worsening of population pressures, food shortages, housing shortages, land tenure problems, unemployment, and so on. Clearly then, it is important to be working for an achievable goal - a goal which, when fulfilled, will allay the problems of underdevelopment.

Rodney [1972], Frank [1969a], Fanon [1963], Bodenheimer [1970] and a host of others have pointed out that the development of Europe and America took place under unique historical circumstance. It is the assumption of the modernizationists that all underdeveloped societies will be able to follow the same pattern. Walter Rodney's point is clear in How Europe Underdeveloped Africa[Rodney 1972]. He argues that the development of Europe came about to a large degree because of African slave labor. He advances that these relationships between Europe and South America and between Europe and Africa had two intrinsically linked effects: the development of Europe and the underdevelopment of Africa and South America.

How Europe "did it"

C. Furtado describes the advent and expansion of an industrial nucleus in 18th century Europe which resulted in development for that continent. This nucleus expanded in three spheres of operation which eventually crystallized into a global set of relationships.

The first thrust of activity took place in western Europe and witnessed the "disorganization of the pre-capitalistic artisan economy and progressive absorption at a higher level of productivity of... a new elastic labour pool." [Furtado 1978 (1964):33][8] a new elastic labour pool. The concomitant rise of technological innovation enabled effective utilization of this new labor resource and hence the urban industrial nucleus was born. Until 1750 the proportion of the Europeans engaged in agriculture was upwards of 80 per cent. By 1950 Britain's agricultural labor force had reached a low of 5 per cent.

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[8] C. Furtado, "Elements of a Theory of Underdevelopment: The Underdeveloped Structure" in *Underdevelopment and Development*, edited by H. Bernstein, p.33

"The Second line of development of the European industrial economy consisted of displacement of frontiers" [Furtado 1978:33] to "still unoccupied land"[9] such as America and Australia. The rise in efficiency of production in Europe created a tendency to excesses of labor surplus. These people were able to set up extensions of the European economy in places where "exceptionally favorable economic potentials existed". [Furtado 1978:34] A great abundance of natural resources combined with new technology to create a rapid rise in levels of productivity and income. This "colonial" extension of the European economy added considerable vitality to the process of European development.

"The third line of expansion of the European industrial economy was towards already inhabited regions, some of which were densely populated, whose old economic systems were of various pre-capitalistic types." [Ibid] There were various forms these intrusions took, ranging from limited trading arrangements to occupation. The consequence of this relationship between Europe and its "partner" was usually the creation of a "hybrid" structure, part tending to behave as a capitalistic system, part perpetuating the features of the previously existing system" [Ibid]. The phenomenon that we are calling "underdevelopment" is in fact the stepchild of this "dualistic" economy.

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[9] Aboriginal peoples not withstanding.

We are talking about the direction development should take a society. The modernizationists have assumed that the path of development taken by Europe in the expansion of its industrial economy can (in fact, necessarily will) be taken by all underdeveloped nations on their respective paths to development.

The critique offered by De Santos regarding this assumption is worth citing in full.

"Such assumptions, however, lack scientific validity because of their ahistorical character. Historical time is not uni-linear and future societies will not be able to attain stages reached by other societies at a previous time. All societies move together towards the future and towards new forms of modern society. The historic experience of developed capitalist societies has been completely transcended; their basic source of private capital formation in foreign trade, the incorporation of vast masses of workers in industrial production, their indigenous technological development, constitute options no longer open to underdeveloped countries today." [DeSantos 1978:57]

The Cost

The cost of pursuing the modernization mirage has resembled "a gigantic social and political earthquake". [Wilber 1978:354] In the Soviet Union the price has been purges, Stalinist terror, forced labor, famine and a persistent denial of human rights. Under capitalism the cost has been "slavery, colonialism, genocide of native races", [Ibid] and again, denial of basic human rights. In addition, valuable time has been lost. An ongoing process of development that could have been capitalized upon has been aborted, and the cultural roots out of which real societal transformation must come have been decimated. [Fanon 1963:206-248, Sears 1977] Such indeed is the plight of the Dene today.

We can only conclude that although the goals of development posed by the modernizationists seem clear, they are in fact a mirage of unachievable (not to mention undesirable) and extremely costly diversions from the path of development. When the mirage evaporates in the light of critical examination we see in its place only the shifting sands of underdevelopment.

The Third Criterion - the Obstacles to Development

Does the theory correctly identify the obstacles that stand in the path of development? Does it help us to understand why the present condition of underdevelopment exists and what forces are operating to maintain or worsen that condition?

The modernization thinkers' list of obstacles to development is consistent with their definition of the problem of development. This list includes a stubborn persistence of "traditional" value structures and patterns constituting a societal "deviance" from the "normal" path of development; lack of sufficient capital and technological base; low levels of literacy; "ideological" interruptions and conflicts leading to instability; a lack of trained managers and professional level administrators; a low level of initiative (achievement motivation[10] a la D. McClelland). ?McClelland 1961?

We have already demonstrated the inadequacy of the traditional vs modern distinction, with its acccompanying use of pattern variables as measures of the modernity of a man or a society. When we say development we are, at least in part, talking about the realization of the human potential for self-reliance as well as improvement in the overall socio-economic conditions of the society in question.

The alleviation of chronic poverty necessitates a development of the economic potential of a people, as well as a fair distribution of the rewards or fruits of the country's productive efforts.

It is the contention of most Marxist writers, including the so-called neo-marxists or dependency theorists, that chronic poverty will continue as long as a privileged class within underdeveloped countries hoards access to resources and rewards the society has to offer, while at the same time controlling the means of production.

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[10] a pseudoscientific way of saying the poor are poor because they are lazy

Upon closer examination of the relationships that exist between developed countries and their underdeveloped counterparts it becomes clear that the structural obstacles to development exposed in classical marxist thought do not comprise an isolated neo-feudal structure, but rather are linked politically and economically with a global system of subtle and sometimes overt domination.

In other words, there are both internal and external obstacles to development for the poor countries, and these obstacles are more often than not linked to each other. Paul Baron, Andre Gunder Frank, and others have carefully traced the historical roots of this kind of "dependency" relationship and described it in intimate detail. [Baron 1978:91, Frank in Wilber 1928:103]

What emerges is a picture of a series of successive dominations with roots in one or several "metropolitan" centers (centers of economic power in developed countries) and tentacles that extend even to the interaction patterns of a rural peasant and his wife.

We have described above how a colonial intrusion yields a hybrid economy, part of which behaves like a capitalistic structure and part of which (sometimes) follows pre-capitalistic forms. The modernizationists say that by developing the middle class, i.e. the professional and managerial elite, and by concentrating on industrial growth in urban centers (and raw material extraction operations) the "modern" sector of the economy (and hence prosperity) will engulf the rest. This has never happened.

What has happened is that the elite have acted as agents for metropolitan powers in America or Europe. The labor of the disenfranchised and the produce of the country are turned into profits which flow out of the poor country to the metropolitan centers. The recompense offered the elite for this sell-out is a privileged position and, often, military and political bolstering in times of "crisis" and "instability". Examples of such regimes take us from pre-revolutionary Iran and Nicaragua to South Korea, Zaire and to Ghana, as well as literally hundreds of other places.

Within the underdeveloped country there are subsets of this pattern from the central elite core to various patron-client relationships that descend from regional to local to intra-local and familial.

The consequence of this pattern is that as the metropolitan power develops, the satellite nation underdevelops (i.e. loses ground), and the human plight that is underdevelopment worsens.

To complicate matters, the size of the cake (i.e. the profit margin that could "trickle down") is shrinking due to the devaluation of local currencies which is in turn directly linked to the intentional devaluation by the metropolitan powers of whatever it is that the underdeveloped country has to sell on the world market. Also, the problem is assuming a spiraling order of complexity because the metropolitan powers themselves are no longer Paris or London or Bruxelles, but have become trans-national economic oligarchies that have transcended the constraints of national policy and which now straddle the globe with a network of economic alliances dedicated to the pursuit of corporate profit.

Since these metropolitan powers now monopolize world markets, they can and do dictate prices. The underdeveloped nation must produce more each year in order to maintain its status quo. Since the poor countries are already producing as much and as fast as they are able, and since the status quo is underdevelopment which by its own insidious nature is eating away at the vitals of the have-not nations, how, we must ask, can modernization theorists propose this capitalistic system as a "solution" to development problems?

We may conclude without further comment that the modernizationists' delineation of the obstacles to development is neither useful nor accurate. Such a pseudo-analysis can only serve to divert attention away from the insidious nature of the relationship that exists between the developed and the underdeveloped.

The Fourth Criterion - Strategies

Does the theory provide strategies and tactics for dealing with or removing the obstacles to development? Are these suggestions and their concominant implications likely to contribute to the solution or to the problem? Are the proposed stategies practical?

The strategy proposed by the modernizationists follows from their definition of the problem of development, their statement of the goals of development, and their analysis of the obstacles to development. Briefly the

"West...diffuses knowledge, skills, organization, values, technology and capital to a poor nation, until over time, its society, culture and personnel become variants of that which made the Atlantic community successful." [Manning Nash, cited in Frank 1969:22]

This has the effect of bolstering the managerial and professional strata (otherwise known as the bourgeoisie) who are assigned the double task of modeling modernity and spreading the economic and political forms which are considered prerequisites to modernization. Because "traditional" societies are often "deviant" in adopting western forms, these elites must sometimes rule with a firm hand until "order" is firmly established and "ideological aberrations" and conflicts are quelled.

This assures a gradual but (theoretically) steady expansion of the economy. By a constant modelling as well as infusion of incentives to various subsectors of the national economy, entrepreneurial activity is stimulated and a national market system develops. This new commercial activity generates investment capital which can create the beginnings of a domestic industrial sector. Rostow's five stages to take-off and sustained growth call for incremental increases in G.N.P. and a growth rate of 5-7 per cent per annum. When the magic number is reached, an irreversible self-perpetuating ever-increasing prosperity is the bottom line promise of the modernization theory.

We have shown what, historically, has resulted from the wholesale application of this "development" strategy (namely, underdevelopment) in our discussions on definitions, objectives, and obstacles. The stark empirical fact is that in the more than thirty years this policy has been marketed in third-world countries, "take-off" has never occurred in any of the capitalistic-oriented underdeveloped economies. What has occurred is a worsening of the plight of the people who live in those countries. It is the condition of underdeveloped man, we are arguing, that must remain our prime focus in deliberations about the problems of underdevelopment.

We must therefore conclude that modernization strategy has not removed obstacles, it has created them. It has not contributed to solutions, but rather has generated and perpetuated problems, and this at an exceedingly high cost to the people living in the countries who have attempted to modernize.

E. Conclusion

Having examined modernization theory on the basis of: 1. its definition of the problem of development, 2. its statement of the desired goals and objectives of development, 3. its analysis of the obstacles to development, and 4. its proposed strategies for development, and finding it not only wanting but deceptively and dangerously cynical with respect to the predicament of underdeveloped peoples, I can only conclude that we must look elsewhere for a suitable theoretical approach to development problems.

Certain examples which have the double advantage of being man-centered and being grounded in active on-going development practice come to mind.

Consider China, which during the three U.N. development decades mentioned in this chapter, has transformed her people, her society, and her economy such that everyone is fed, clothed, and housed, most are schooled and all are educated, and this in a country that had known little else but famine and disease of immense proportions for centures. Neighbouring India and Pakistan who have followed the modernization mirage are burdened with millions of starving, begging, diseased, illiterate, beyond-desparate, shells of human beings.

Why the difference? The Maoists believed that one of the principal aims of development "should be to raise the level of material welfare of the population" but that this should only be done in the context of the "development of human beings". [Gurley 1978:336-7] Hence the development of the "socialist man" and his total transformation to become a person devoted to the service of humanity was a very important part of China's development program. The task of instilling individual dignity and collective pride combined with that of raising political awareness to enable the people to recognize and unmask injustices and economic inequalities, these efforts coupled with the courage and political will to safeguard the elusive egalitarianism so difficult to achieve in actual practice, were some of the salient features of the Chinese development program.

I am not suggesting that the Chinese model should or could be duplicated elsewhere. Cuba and Tanzania and many others have contributions to make in the quest for an indigenous development model. But "indigenous" is the key. A model of development that is to advance a people who have been underdeveloped must spring from those people and must be centered on their development. Principles can be borrowed from other efforts in other places, and surely in today's world, one major goal of all developing nations (including North America, western Europe, the Soviet Union and the third and fourth world) should be to create a new world order based on principles of justice and centered on the needs of man--who does not live by bread alone. The Dene have much to teach us, as we will see in later chapters, about the practical implications of such a vision of development.

IV. Root Rot

Those Dene people who have never known anything else but life in the settlements (with occasional excursions into the bush for purposes of hunting, trapping or fishing) are for the most part under the age of thirty-five years. Almost everyone in older age categories hass had to adjust to a drastic alteration in their social structure, in their economic activities, and perhaps most difficult of all, in the profoundly personal, culturally-rooted activity of making sense of the events of life; of structuring them in a system of meaning that integrates oneself with one's daily activities, and those with the activities of one's family, friends, and community.

The eminent anthropologist, Edward Sapir, wrote these words to describe what happens to native people when they are culturally uprooted:

"When the political integrity of his tribe is destroyed by contact with whites the old cultural values cease to have the atmosphere needed for their continued validity, the Indian finds himself in a state of bewildered vacuity. Even if he succeeds in making what his well-wishers consider great progress towards enlightenment, he is apt to retain an uneasy sense of a loss of some vague and great good, some state of mind that he would be hard put to define, but which gave him courage and joy that latter-day prosperity never quite seems to have regained for him. What has happened is that he has slipped out of the warm embrace of a culture into the cold air of fragmentary existence." [Sapir 1970:96-97]

The story of Dene life in the settlements has been in many respects like the strange saga of two lovers who slip in and out of "the warm embrace" (in this case the embrace of traditional culture); who are estranged from each other and yet at the same time unable to escape their profound need for one another.

On the other hand it seems that the material needs of the people were being met in their new life in the settlements. The government provided free health care, free education for the children, free housing and a cash flow in the form of family allowance, old age pension, welfare and some wage-labour schemes. This cash could be converted to imported goods at the Hudson's Bay post, and into alcohol; in short into a lulling, artificially-generated wall of security. Of course one could always hunt, fish and trap if one wished. What was different was that it was no longer absolutely essential for survival to do so.

Yet beneath the almost too rosy surface were hidden many serious problems for the Dene. For example, also imported from the south was a new form of government that clearly violated traditional Dene values by insisting on a "democratically elected" chief and band council. Many problems arose in the communities that can be traced back to this imposition, but the colonizers did not seem to be aware

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of these difficulties. Indeed, the transition from traditionality to modernity was to be accomplished in one generation. By buying off the older generation of Dene with welfare, by educating the children to be wage-earning "Canadians like everybody else" the government hoped to "modernize" the North as well as the native northerners. Mel Watkins explains the profound difference for the Dene between fur-trading and wage-labour.

"The prosecution of the fur-trade depended...on the Indian as fur-gather. As such the Indian was a commodity producer, not a wage-earner, and the fur-trade was literally a trade, a commercial activity, not an industrial activity. The Indian became dependent to the extent that he became vulnerable to the exigencies of the trade". [Watkins 1977:87]

But there were two major, indeed traumatic, changes that came with wage-labour that had never before occurred.

1.

Never before did the Dene directly sell his labour and his time.

2.

Never before was his ownership and control of the land in question.

As Watkins points out, "to turn land-bound people into landless wage earners" inevitably requires ruthless manipulation and unusual force." [1977:88] Douglas Elias describes it this way:

> "...the producers, in this case the native people of Canada were separated from the means of production, embodied essentially in the land and the products of the land. The means of production became concretized and monopolized in the hands of a single social class, and natives became a class owning no possessions and ultimately having no exchangable commodity other than labour..." [cited in Watkins 1977:93]

For perhaps ten thousand years the roots of Dene identity grew in the soil of meaningful work directly related to survival. Now there was nothing to feed those roots--no necessity, no urgency, and no pride in being self-reliant, self-sufficient experts in the business of winning a good living from a harsh environment. Sadly disoriented, the old people looked to the youth.

Surely the youth would find a place in this new order that rushed in like a tidal wave on the traditional world of the Dene. Perhaps there wasn't much chance for the older generation, but the young were receiving an education that would ensure them a secure economic future. Jobs would come to the North and with them, prosperity. Things were sure to improve.

But the honeymoon effect passed, and gradually the optimistic glow that had heartened the people as they moved into an apparently secure settlement close to friends and family, trading post, church and medical assistance--all this began to give way like bad ice beneath an unwary traveller. At first the feelings of unease and doubt seemed to be almost free-floating. It was difficult for the people to make rational sense of their anxieties. Surely time would heal things. It takes time to get used to a new way of life, they told themselves.

Indeed, when the spring or fall caribou hunt was on, or when it was time to hunt beaver or muskrats, or when people travelled as before to fish-camps and enjoyed once again the freedom born of a direct connection with the land they loved, the dark clouds were, for the time being, dissipated.

But the winters in the Territories are long and dark and cold. Settlement life was both more attractive than the hardships of winter in the bush, and necessary because of schooling laws. Again the uneasy feelings built up. Social pathologies such as family breakdown, outbursts of violence, alcoholism, and even suicide proliferated. Such things had been unheard of only a generation before when people lived on the land.

Frustration mounted as people quite used to a high degree of autonomy were suddenly regulated by a remote-control system of social manipulation that is the colonial structure in the North. No longer were the most important decisions concerning one's life made in consultation with one's family or neighbours, or indeed with anyone. Control came from the government--that vague impersonal machine whose hired servants seemed to have no grasp of reality as the Dene perceived it to be.

Ethnologists Jane Christian and Peter Gardner [1977] discussed some of the difficulties Dene people have with Euro-Canadian patterns of thought, social interaction, and styles of government. What follows is a summary of their observations.

1.

Dene find white people extremely rigid in the way they express ideas. Instead of reaching decisions by a pragmatic consideration of what would be the most effective course of action, they cite "authoritative" bosses and timeless rules. [1977:401]

2.

Whites are always making (then breaking) guarantees and promises. They insist that the Dene also must make guarantees and promises. To the Dene it seems irresponsible to predict what one will do (that is binding oneself to a specific future course of action) before knowing the circumstances which might become pertinent to selection of alternatives. For example, it seems strange (from the Dene point of view) to predict when one will eat without knowing when one will become hungry. That a white man will schedule a meal for three days in advance seems absurd to a Dene.

3.

School children are taught to draw conclusions on "unsound imperical propositions" [1977:402] to demonstrate their "knowledge" by reciting what they know to others. To Dene, many years of experience in a listening and watching mode are necessary before it is deemed proper to "tell". For young people to "tell" demonstrates "profound ignorance". This naturally becomes a source of conflict between generations. Children should "listen", not "tell". [1977:401]

4.

In the political realm Dene are used to a high degree of individual autonomy, and in not interfering in the autonomous actions of other individuals. It is therefore very counter-cultural for a Dene to challenge the actions or statements of political authorities--be they government administrators, police officers, or school authorities--no matter how outrageous those actions, because this would a violation of the other's rights of individual autonomy.

5.

As well, Dene tend to treat each person as an individual, including each new white policeman or administrator, and not to lump, for example, all whitemen in one category. It was therefore difficult for the Dene community to perceive the colonial presence as an integrated system of external control. This may account, in part, for why Dene resistance to Euro-Canadian controls (even in the face of insensitivity and many assault on Dene dignity) was slow in coming.

6.

Also in the political realm, we have seen that Dene leadership patterns were situational, not institutional in the sense of a perpetually existing office apart from an individual who might hold it. A negative evaluation of "bossing" and of social stratification militates against any form of "representative" government for the Dene. Yet that is precisely what the chief and band council system imported from Ottawa purports to be. By artificially elevating certain individuals to positions of power, waves of disunity were spread throughout each community.

The only other times that this is known to have occurred is when traders took it upon themselves to appoint "trading chiefs" and when the treaty parties selected certain "chiefs" to sign the treaties on behalf of the Dene.

People don't like electioneering, bragging and competition for leadership which the southern system demands. They don't even like voting, as it tends to divide the community into unnecessary factions. Many people simply refuse to vote in elections for this reason. [Christian et al 1977:92]

From this list of tension-creating culture clashes which arose out of the move to the settlements, two of these issues contained within them the seeds of doom for the government's assimilation policies. These were the issues of self-determination and of education. Both of these issues drove permanent wedges between the Dene and the "modernization" planned for them by the colonizers.

We shall now examine each of these issues in turn as they affected the lives of the people in their new home in the settlements. The main reason for focussing on these two issues (self-determination and education) is that they were later to become key taproots out of which grew the Dene Nation movement as we know it today.

Self-Determination

We have already discussed the traditional Dene government and leadership patterns in some detail in Chapter I. We have seen how a delicate balance was achieved between the traditional Dene insistance on individual autonomy on the one hand, and the need for collective consensus on the other. We have also seen that Dene notions of leadership were rooted in the pragmatic combination of a need for that leadership for a particular situation or task, and the appearance of the right man for the job. The individual who became a "leader" in the Dene model arose with the full consensus of his constituency (not a vote) to assume a particular role responsibility. When the particular function had been performed (e.g. leading the hunt) the office of leader ceased to exist, and the individual held no special rank among his fellows. This egalitarian, participatory, consensus style of selfgovernment was effective and it was harmonious with the Dene patterns of social interaction and with Dene values. The political forms imported from southern Canada and foisted upon the Dene after 1950 were not in the least harmonious with Dene values.

To begin with, the Dene were quite unused to being told by their "leaders" (or anyone else) what they were to do or not to do. As well, the idea that one or a group of Dene could speak or decide for the rest was utterly bizarre and constituted a serious violation of the profoundly-felt Dene right to represent himself in matters that affected him and to decide for himself what course of action he would take.

The chief and band council system through which the Dene were to relate to the federal government as "treaty Indians" and the separate settlement council system which was to oversee the management of the settlement vis-a-vis the Territorial government were both institutional forms modelled after southern Canadian counterparts. Among their salient features were:

1. Elections as a means of choosing leaders;
2. Representative democracy - a system wherein a few represented, decided for and spoke for the rest;
3. The creation of permanent political posts (i.e. chief, counsellor, settlement council members, advisory board members) divorced from any individuals who might occupy them;
4. Decision-making by majority vote rather than by consensus.

Perhaps the greatest change in the political realm was the context of decision-making. As we have pointed out in Chapter I, the local band was the basic self-sufficient unit in traditional Dene society.

These were typically small groups of people: twenty to thirty closely related individuals. There were leaders only when the situation called for leadership, and even then the traditional consensus mode of decision-making as described in Chapter One was employed. The Dene never knew a large-scale type of social organization (except for mid-winter and spring gatherings), and the traditional Dene are not practised in the use of consensus method for larger-scale political interaction. Settlement context demands a higher order of cultural and political complexity than did traditional fish-lake camps. Simply stated, there are more social forces at work, many more interest groups, no strong sense of community identification and no long-standing community memory to rely upon. Missing is the traditional sense of continuity from the past into the future provided by kinship, which was the primary basis for membership in a given local band. Missing also is the political cohesion and strong sense of belonging which a smaller society, with an economic rationale based on reciprocal sharing, typically endows upon it's members.

Along with "the individualization of poverty", [Asch 1977] came the individualization of power. Serious social consequences resulted. That individuals should assume positions of power complete with economic rewards and yet divorced from the consensus control of the people could not help but engender inter-family hostilities which no traditional institutional mechanism was equipped to deal with.

A medium-size settlement (say two hunded and fifty to three hundred people) might contain ten local bands which had been, for the most part, self-sufficient autonomous political units before the move to settlements. Now someone from Band "A" is elected chief, another from Band "B" becomes councillor, and another obtains a job with the government (perhaps because of his membership in the chief's "family" i.e. his local band). People become suspicious of motives and jealous of one another's advantage.

Consequently the fundamental prerequisite for community development of any kind to take place is subverted before the process of development can even begin. That prerequisite is unity of purpose and a common identity. [See Roberts 1979] The settlements are collections of individuals, but to a large measure, because of the institutions imposed on the Dene by their colonizers, these collectivities of individuals are by no means communities.

Try to imagine the impact of these new social relations on the consciousness of Dene individuals who have spent most of their lives, or at least their formative years, in the secure, unified social environment of the local band. In that earlier context everyone was kin to everyone else. As well, the perpetual balance between individual autonomy and non-interference on the one hand, and collective consensus on the other, was carefully maintained. It must surely have been a severe shock to have been thrust into a social field where competition, distrust and disunity were the dominant features of life. Sapir's description is very apt indeed. Such an individual "has slipped out of the warm embrace of a culture into the cold air of fragmentary existence". [Sapir 1970:97]

We have not yet touched on the issue of self-determination as it is usually discussed in the context of a struggle against colonial domination. For our present purposes it will be sufficient to describe the structure of a settlement government in terms of areas of jurisdication in order to show how decisions of importance were made by non-Dene on the basis of foreign cultural values, external vested political and economic interests, and all by remote-control.

By 1960 most larger settlements had some variation of the following features:

1\.

A mission church with a resident priest who wielded varying degrees of social influence depending on his personality.

2\.

A police detachment with two or more R.C.M.P. officers and sometimes their families. The police had little or no crime to contend with in those days. The enforcement of game regulations was their major duty.

3\.

A school, usually small and until the 1950s connected to the mission, but now run by the federal government. Curriculum, teachers, policy and regulations were all imported from the South.

4\.

A Hudson Bay store run by a manager and an assistant brought in from the South by the company. The store determined what goods came into the community, the local price on furs, and who got credit and who didn't.

5\.

A community hall for meetings and the occasional dance, usually but not always, controlled by the chief and band council.

6\.

A dispensary or hospital with resident nurses.

Further, some settlements had weather observation centers, department of transport depots, and with these, a white administrator or a technician.

Really, life in 1960 was fairly simple. There were few decisions to make, and those that there were to make were not the important ones anyway.

The Territorial Government

In 1967 the seat for the Government of the Northwest Territories was moved to Yellowknife. Previously, most administration was carried out from Ottawa. It was at this time that the territorial government assumed many of the powers it now holds. One of the first consequences of this change on local settlements was the creation of the settlement council. Now not one, but two local councils having separate areas of responsibility, were to govern the Dene (the band council and the settlement council). These settlement councils were created as municipal advisory bodies to the Territorial Government on matters of municipal services. The responsibilities included (and still include) water delivery, garbage and sewage disposal, snow removal, road maintenance and town planning related to land use inside the settlements.

Each settlement council came complete with a settlement manager (always a white man) whose responsibility it was to work with the councils and promote their acceptance in the settlement. Really, this manager ensured that the paper relationship between Yellowknife and the settlements did not lapse into careless confusion or oblivion. He also acted as a gate-keeper between the community and the Government regarding funding, because his reports weighed heavily in decisions made from the capital.

The upshot of this imported system of government for the Dene was that in order to "modernize", new ways of doing things had to be "learned". At least now each settlement had a "legitimate" government--a body of responsible individuals to whom government and individuals could relate as they worked towards the "development of the North". Though the full awareness of the implications of these changes was not to surface for a few more years, the feelings of powerlessness, alienation, anomie, and the related social pathologies (alcoholism, family breakdown, family violence, a growing population of disenfranchised school dropouts, rifts between older and younger generations, unemployment and welfare dependency, to name some of the major problems) were proliferating at an alarming rate. The feeling of unease grew. Something was clearly going wrong. The Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, wrote a book about a similar time in the African context. The book was called *Things Fall Apart*. [Achebe 1958] Increasingly people in the settlements realized that things were falling apart, that they were powerless to stop the process, and that what is worse, "all the king's horses and all the king's men" were not even trying to put things together again.

A. Traditional Education

One is tempted to begin talking about native education in the North from the date of the arrival of the catholic Sisters of Charity (August 28th, 1867). The Grey Nuns, as they are now called, opened a school at Fort Providence seventeen years after the first catholic mission was established in the Territories. Church-connected schooling was the only imported schooling until the 1950s, despite continuous federal presence since the signing of treaties.

I say one is tempted to start in 1867, but to do so would be ahistorical unless one chooses to equate education exclusively with formal Euro-Canadian schooling. No doubt many would feel comfortable with such an equation. As Ivan Illich puts it:

> "Our industrial categories tend to define results as products of specialized institutions and instruments. Armies produce defence for countries. Churches procure salvation and an afterlife. Binet defined intelligence as that which tests test. Why not then conceive of intelligence as the product of schools? Once this has been accepted, unschooled education gives the impression of something spurious, illegitimate, and certainly unaccredited." [Illich 1968:4]

The Dene survived as a people in one of the most inhospitable climates in the world for some ten thousand years. No people could achieve such a marvel without education, the transference of values, knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. The kind of learning that went on during those ten thousand years was for the most part what Botkin et al [1979] called "maintenance learning".

> "Traditionally, societies and individuals have adopted a pattern of continuous maintenance learning interrupted by short periods of innovations stimulated largely by the shock of external events. Maintenance learning is the aquisition of fixed outlooks, methods and rules for dealing with known and recurring situations." [Botkin et al 1979:10]

It is highly probable that a Dene child in the year 1456 (when the Turks toppled Constantinople) learned in much the same patterns as Dene children do outside the formal school system today. These elements served as underpinnings to the Dene traditional approach to child-rearing. We know this because they are still of great importance today for the Dene. Based on the somewhat scanty ethnographic material available on Dene traditional educational practices [Helm 1961, 1968; Honigmann 1946, 1954; Basso 1972; Christian and Gardner 1977] as well as from my own discussions with Dene people in the northern Yukon and the Northwest Territories (1975, 1976, 1980, 1981), the following features stand out as being significant in the process of Dene traditional education.

1. Education, like all other Dene institutions, flowed out of Dene patterns of daily existence and had no formal institutional structure. There were no schools per se, no specially designated "professional" teachers, no curriculum, and no formal evaluation of the learner. As in Dene political activities, certain individuals assumed responsibility for various phases of a child's education. At first this task fell upon the parents, and more especially the mother. Older siblings shared some of the workload. What is important to underscore is that the Dene handled education in the context of everyday life. The notion of schooling per se is a foreign intrusion into what had proved to be an extremely reliable and efficient approach to education.

In the family camp every person knew himself to be equally under the protection and the responsibility of his family group regardless of his or her age, sex, or competency in survival skills. Children were the children of the family camp and everyone shared the responsibility for ensuring that children grew up knowing what they needed to know in order to become useful family members.

While there were no special teachers, parents and especially elders, played significant roles at certain times in a child's development.

2. Dene education was oriented to the needs of the community. By contrast the dominant Euro-Canadian culture tends to orient education to the individual. In the Dene context a person learned for the benefit of the camp (society) and not for his own exclusive benefit. This underlying value made learning an act of service to the community.

From the community's standpoint, the learner is vitally important because he or she is rendered more able to participate in the subsistence activities of the camp as cultural values and new knowledge and skills are acquired.

Thus the context of learning is: a. keen supportive interest of those with whom the learner has daily association, and b. high motivation to succeed in order to be able to contribute to the well-being of the society. This attitude is reinforced by hearty approval of progress made in the learning of life-skills. [Christian et al 1977; Helm 1961, 1968] Personal achievement outside that context is regarded as perverse. [Helm 1956, 1961]

3. Dene education was pragmatic, that is it met specific here-and-now needs in the real world. Christian et al [1977] document a variety of learning situations (such as a young girl learning to tan a moose hide) which grew out of the routine of the day (aunty is working on the moose hide) and the desire of the learner to acquire new information or a new skill. Education for hypothetical situations that *might* occur in the future (e.g. the simulated stalking of a moose) was not part of the Dene approach to learning. There is no evidence in the literature that suggests that learning was ever divorced from

1. the real life context wherein the information or skill could be acquired naturally, either by watching and doing, or being told by the "teacher", and "tested" by the learner at a later date;
2. the desire of the learner to acquire the new knowledge; and
3. the need of the community for its members to acquire the necessary values, information and skills to ensure the continued well-being of the group.

4. Learning almost always took place in the context of a one-to-one personal relationship between the "teacher" and the learner. This may be contrasted with the Euro-Canadian notion of schooling which endeavors to mass-produce learning. Within the Dene culture there are fairly well

established rules governing this interaction.

1.

The learner can recruit a teacher and in fact should do so [Christian et al 1977:120], or

2.

the teacher can recruit a learner, and is encouraged to do so. [Ibid:120]

3.

It is up to the teacher to determine when and where the learning situation will take place, how long it will last, and when it is over. Thus the "learner/listener" waits until he is dismissed by his teacher/speaker. [Ibid:119 120]

4.

Neither teacher nor learner can be forced into a learning situation against his or her will. [Ibid:121] This is consonant with Dene valuation of individual autonomy, so often reported in the literature. [Mason 1913, Honigman 1946, Nelson 1973, Helm 1956, 1961, 1972] In practice "teachers" almost never refuse to share what they know unless they "believe the request is not serious". [Christian and Gardner 1977:120][11]

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[11] Christian and Gardner's work stands as a needed first attempt to understand Dene cognitive and learning processes. Its empirical validity needs to be tested by further field research. Considerable work is now underway in the area of Dene language acquisition patterns by the Northwest Territorial Department of Education as a part of their program to establish mother tongue native language instructional programs on the primary level in N.W.T. schools (English will be taught as a second language). For information see the N.W.T. Department of Education report of

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5. "Listening" is equated with learning in Dene culture. Contrast this to telling, reciting or somehow demonstrating which plays a preponderant role in Euro-Canadian approaches to education. "Specifically, listening includes both active listening and periodic questions about points or connections missed, and active watching and eventual trial and/or participation in technological, social and ritual activities." [Christian et al 1977:120]

Children who do not "listen" are a worry for their parents because it is felt that they do not learn if they do not approach learning in the passive-receptive mode that is the Dene way. Talking too much blocks learning. A person is thought to be rude, out of place, and foolish who talks too much. No one should "tell them" what they know until they have matured (thirty-five to forty-five years old).

A child "should listen" from age seven up. Christian et al [1977] documented differences in receptivity to learning between children who were talked to and encouraged to listen from infancy by their parents, and those children who did not receive this sort of attention.

The Dene learner's opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge is limited by at least three factors:

1.

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[11] (cont'd) 1978:15-16, as well as a subsequent discussion in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

the availability of a competant, willing teacher. This involves some sort of personal relationship.

2.

The occurence of the situation wherein the appropriate learning can take place, e.g. a moose hunt.

3.

The willingness of the learner to "listen". It is generally thought that quiet attention leads to learning in all situations. Natural forces and spirits can and will teach if a learner is receptive.

6. Dene culture encourages life-long learning. People do not view childhood as the only time for learning. On the contrary,

"learning of basics and of new techniques, ideas or of differences in detail may continue throughout life, especially from spouses, work partners and some siblings. People are even open to learn from their children." [Ibid 119]

B. Colonial Education

Some twenty-five years have passed since the Dene have moved to the settlements so that their children could be schooled. The school system imported from the South was far from being appropriate to the needs of native people. Cross-Canada statistics for native Children on failure and drop-out rates around 1965 were summarized as follows by E.R. McEwin, then the Executive Director of the

Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada:

"About fifty per cent of Indians do not go beyond grade six and about sixty-one per cent fail to reach grade eight; almost ninety-seven per cent fail to reach grade twelve."[12] The deficiencies of the Canada-wide Native Education Program were imported from the South into Dene schools. An examination of the literature on Native schooling lists a host of problems to account for the high failure rate. These include cultural value conflicts, performance expectations conflicts, a curriculum that is irrelevant to the learners world, language barriers, conflicts between home and school expectations of the child's behavior, and the inevitable identity crisis resulting from two conflicting sets of messages the learner receives about who he or she is.

Residential Schools

It should be noted that schooling was present in the Territories for a long time before the move to settlements. It was in fact the perceived negative effects of sending children to residential schools far away from family and friends that influenced many Dene families to opt for a new life in settlements so that children could at least live at home and still get an education. While space does not permit a detailed description of the residential school phenomenon, a few brief comments will help to provide the reader with a frame-work for approaching and understanding the effect of Euro-Canadian schooling on Dene culture.

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[12] Cited in an unpublished 1965 brief of the Indian Association of Alberta to the Alberta Government proposing an Indian Education Center be established in Edmonton.

The largest residential schools were located in Yellowknife and Inuvik and were built at the end of the 1950's. Four hundred to five hundred children attended each of these institutions. Somewhat smaller schools which existed for many years before 1960 operated at Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Providence, Fort Smith and Hay River. It is useful to bear in mind the descriptions given in Chapters One and Two of Dene traditional life-ways as we examine the main features of residential schools. Bear in mind also the intimate nature of traditional family organization, the country food, the hunt, the language--and then consider the following description.

Speaking no english, having never ridden in a car or truck, having never seen a two-storey building, having never eaten anything but meat, fish, bannock and perhaps the occasional sweet treat, young Dene children (aged six or seven) left the world of the caribou eaters and were catapulted into the technocratic universe of the white man.

The "great round-up" as it was called, began in August. Children of all ages boarded one of hundreds of "Twin Otter" planes that fanned out across the Territories to collect the school children.

Often the ride made the children sick. Then, after lay-overs and waits and a transfer to a larger plane at a staging area--Inuvik or Yellowknifè! The school "with it's throngs of people, it's gigantic buildings, it's stifling steam heat, it's strange language, it's unfamiliar food and it's soft beds where one sleeps alone between white sheets." [Hobart 1965:2]

Children were then divided from siblings and friends according to age level, issued clothes and assigned a bed number. The supervisor (a native) spoke only English in order to force the children to learn. "No Loucheaux or Haire or Dogrib or Slavey is spoken here", they were told. Thus for as long as a year children were unable to express to anyone in authority what their basic needs were; loneliness, sickness, confusion, all had to borne in lonely silence.

Aside from the heat, the communication vacuum, the trauma of sleeping alone, the strange food, the mammoth buildings, the sheer scale of social interaction (from a local group of perhaps thirty people, twenty of them children) and the meeting of traditional enemies (Eskimo) as fellow victims of the process--aside from all of this strangeness--the sheer regimentation and continual usurption of personal liberties and individual autonomy could not have been but a staggering shock to the new "student".

But little by little adjustments were made. English was learned (though often not too well) and the strange life became familiar and even pleasant. Then came summer vacation and for the student perhaps it was more traumatic to return to the life of his family than it had been to leave in the first place. Food seemed course and undigestible. Dwellings were "dirty" and "cold". Things seemed ill-at-ease between child and parents. Parents complained of "disobedience" and "disrespectfulness"; of their children being "hard to manage", and worst of all,

> "the child no longer saw and performed without prompting the chores which needed to be done. Instead the child had to be told what to do." [Hobart Chapt Three:8]

That the children waited to be told is not surprising. It is difficult to imagine how a residential school with five hundred children could operate if children were permitted to do what they wanted whenever they felt moved to do so. There is a time for everything at the schools, and usually a bell rings to tell you when that time has arrived.

Dene camp life placed a large measure of responsibility on the child's shoulders. There were nets to be tended, dogs to be fed, wood to be cut and hauled, fish and meat to be prepared for drying, etc.,-etc. The school life demanded very little in comparison and removed the burden of responsibility for the well-being of others from the child. At school he was no one's keeper, not even his own.

Parents complained of a loss of the ability to speak the language of the family. Indeed, often after several years away at school, children found it very difficult to speak their mother tongue. Older students usually spoke English mixed with a Dene language to their peers and siblings. One researcher writing about the same phenomenon among the Cree in Quebec wrote:

"Parents often feel that children talk in English in order to prevent them from understanding what they are saying. Furthermore parents tend to associate the use of English with hostility because when children are angry they often yell at their parents or siblings in English." [Winthrob et al 1968:25]

Children, especially older children, tended to view vacations as relaxation periods and not a time to "work hard" as they had done all winter. Parents on the other hand felt that

"students have been 'lazy' all winter and haven't done any real work while they (the parents) have had to cope with the ardours of life on the trapline." [Ibid]

Naturally parents feel children should help the family with tasks like cooking, carrying water and wood, and other chores. When pressured older students refused to "listen". Instead they "talked back" and in general tended to form their own adolescent subcultures "based on shared experiences at school". [Ibid:27]

Parents noted that frequent, violent arguments (very foreign to Dene culture) arose and that children seemed unconcerned about hurting others as well as unwilling to defer to elders. If we reflect on what the objectives were of those who planned and managed the residential school experience, these consequences are not at all surprising.

"The educational philosophy of the Educational Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources is based on the conception of a drastically changing Arctic and is catapulting children into educational situations designed to change their orientations, motivations, and skills with maximum rapidity." [Hobart 1965 Chapter 1:3]

In addition to the above we may add that this enterprise was conceived in the marriage of two assumptions; a. Indian culture is not worth preserving. It is an outworn, useless, dying thing [Fumoleau 1977:150], and b. the nature of man is to evolve (socially) to become cultural, social, political and economic replicas of Euro-Canadians.

What was most damaging for the Dene point of view, was that their children were taught that traditional values constitute obstacles to "progress and development"; that the individualistic achievement aspirations of southern Canadians are derived from a more "advanced" form of social organization; and that the political institutions and the economic assumptions of southern Canadians are infinitely superior to the primitive "anarchy" and pseudo-economy of the traditional Dene.

In Memmi's terms, Dene children are taught to internalize the colonizer's perception of Dene culture. This perception typically evokes an ethnocentric devaluation of the culture of the colonized peoples. [Memmi 1965] Eventually, explains Martin Carnoy,

"...the colonized accepts this caricature. All the institutions of society are shaped by the colonizer to fit his views of the colonized. Since the colonized is forced to function within those institutions, he begins to accept the colonizers conception of him. If the colonized resists that image he is punished; if he is aggressive, refuses to work like an animal or to be an object, the colonizer's law is used to find him guilty." [Carnoy 1970:62]

A 1972 Northwest Territories Department of Education document (entitled "Elementary Education in the Northwest Territories") calling for radical changes in the approach taken toward Native people in the schools has this to say about discipline in the school system:

"Disciplinary practices can take several forms as for example raised voice; cuffing the child; using a convenient book to arouse the unwary from suspected apathy and/or lethargy; outright corporal punishment via a strap or ruler; deprivation of rewards. With few exceptions the non-Native person accepts any or all of these forms of punishment as quite routine. 'It is the way it is done.' In the Native experience overt signs of anger and frustration...have little meaning. What may appear to the non-Native as being permissive on the part of the parents in actuality may be a subtle yet effective approach to child-rearing based on love and understanding of a deeper quality than is conventionally known in many Euro-Canadian households..." [N.W.T. Department of Education 1972:8]

That Dene culture devalues aggressive confrontation and the usurption of the autonomy of the individual (even children) has been borne out, as we have already noted, in a wide range of ethnographic research. [Helm 1961 1968; Helm and Lourie 1961, Honigman 1946, Christian et al 1946, Christian et al 1977]

The disorienting consequences for Dene children of spending the first (formative) six years of life being acculturated in traditional Dene patterns, and then being thrust into a foreign, brain-washing concentration camp style school experience cannot but have caused severe, and in many cases unalterable, damage to the child, to the family, and to the community he or she was eventually to return to.

The effect on Dene communities of seeing their children go through such a devastating experience cannot be over-estimated. The very roots of Dene culture were being severed; or perhaps more accurately the roots had been infected with a malignant bacteria that was soon to alter the entire organism that was Dene society. The 1972 Northwest Territories Department of Education Report, "Elementary Education in the Northwest Territories", pleaded with teachers to stop mindlessly propounding Euro-Canadian values in the classroom without regard for Dene values. They contrasted ten value issues that converge in the school setting between Native and non-Native cultures. These are well-worth citing because they delineate in large measure the value conflict being struggled with in Dene settlements today. The integration of contemporary socio-political reality with Dene values is one of the most challenging issues facing the Dene Nation movement today. It will assist the reader to bear in mind that our "Euro-Canadian" society is now floundering as it searches for those same value foundations which the traditional Dene culture cherished.

Euro-Canadian vs Athapaskan-Eskimo Values

1.

"Man must harness and cause the forces of nature to work for his benefit; vs nature will provide for man if he will live in harmony with it and obey its laws."

2.

"Man lives in the present and uses the present to prepare for improvement in the immediate future, vs Life is concerned with the here-and-now. Accepting nature and it's seasons, we shall get through the years one at a time. If the things I am doing now are good, doing these things all my life will be good."

3.

"All men should strive to climb the ladder of success. In this sense success can be measured by a wide range of superlatives; first, the most, the best, etc. vs The influence of the elders is important. The young people lack maturity and experience. Man seeks perfection within himself--not in comparison with others."

4.

"Success will come from hard work and will be measured by material possessions, the extent to which one can command others to work for him, etc. vs Man should work to satisfy present needs. Accumulating more than one needs is selfish."

5.

"People should save for the future; "a penny saved is a penny earned', 'take care of the pennies and the dollars will look after themselves'. vs Share freely what you have. One of the greatest virtues is giving. 'He who has plenty while others are in need is shamed.'"

6.

"Life is orderly and regulated by clock times. Punctuality is vital for the operation of organizations in an industrialized economy. vs Time is always with us and there is time available to do all things, if not now then later. Of what value is promptness if people are not ready?"

7.

"Change is progress and progress is essential. Therefore, change is accepted as the norm and man must strive to achieve continuous change. vs The old ways may be followed with confidence and respect. Change should be approached cautiously and treated with respect."

8.

"There is a scientific explanation for all events and all behaviors vs Folklore, mythology, the supernatural, magic may be used to provide adequate explanations for some behaviors and events."

9.

"It is necessary to be aggressive and competitive in order to attempt to go ahead. vs It is preferable to remain submerged within the group until such time as one's specific skill and/or assistance is called for. There is no need to seek overtly to lead or attempt to dominate. Each individual shapes his own destiny."

10.

"Self-realization is limited only by individual capacities to excel and achieve, vs the group is more important than any individual." [N.W.T. Department of Education, 1972: 7,8]

Schooling in the Settlments

When the children of the Dene returned to their families they brought with them the value conflicts delineated above, and so when, in the 1950s, the government began building schools in settlements, it is easy to see why Dene families preferred community schools to residential ones. At least children could live with their families and still receive the education that would ensure they would "get ahead" in the future.

The compulsory school law meant that parents had to choose between no "education" for children, to which was tied legal penalties and a cut-off of all government monies to that family, or going to the bush (as they had always done) to hunt and trap. If parents decided to stay in town, they were automatically doomed to welfare dependency because wage labour was simply not available. If they chose to be self-reliant and to go trapping and hunting, it meant that they would have to leave their children, and often wives, or brothers and sisters behind for months at a time.

Compounding the effect that either of these options had on Dene life was the cultural indoctrination children were receiving. This indoctrination effectively caused the children to turn away in disgust from their own culture, and families. And yet, pathetically, there was nowhere else to turn.

The settlement schools were (and are) not a part of the community per se; neither physically nor culturally. Physically, along with "The Bay", the mission, the police post, and other government buildings including residents for white government employees and teachers, the school stands apart from the Dene portion of the settlement as an incongruous imposing structure that looks and feels like a Whiteman's institution.

Control of the schools does not rest in the community. It rests in foreign hands far away. Teachers and administrators are selected and sent in from the South with very little or no reference to the community. These white strangers come for ten months and go again, often never to return.

"Sometimes it happens that the settlement people don't even know who these strangers are except that they are teachers that are seen occasionally at school functions or fleetingly at the movie, dance or some other community place. Essentially teachers live in enclaves, separated, like the school, from the very people they are there to serve." [N.W.T. Department of Education 1972:6]

These enclaves bear the typical stamp of colonial occupation: conspicuous opulence in comparison to the accommodations of the ordinary people in the settlement. The houses are five times larger, much warmer, are equipped with indoor plumbing complete with hot and cold running water, and by comparison are luxuriously furnished. The people who live in this tiny island of middle America are either white foreigners, most of whom never associate with the townspeople except in the role of teacher, policemen or administrator, or they are Dene who have internalized colonialist values. They are the governing class; the privileged elite. Theirs is the kind of bubble universe which (typically) permits the illusion of being "civilized" in an otherwise "savage" environment. For the "sacrifice" of living in such disparity with their neighbours they are awarded "isolation and hardship allowance" in addition to their regular salary.

Until recently the use of the school building in the community during off-hours was not permitted. The curriculum was, and to a large measure still is, the brainchild of foreigners who cannot help but leave the stamp of their ethnocentric bias on anything they undertake.

At this writing, an entire generation of children have passed through the education system imported from southern Canada. They have studied the history, language, customs, music, art and religion of the Euro-Canadians, but they remain Dene.

Promises Promises

The phrase "head'em off at the pass" can be borrowed from cowboy and Indian movies to talk about how the formal education system has been used in many colonial and neo-colonial settings as well in the industrialized countries to block marginal peoples from access to the reward structure of the society. This is accomplished by using schooling as a gate-keeper. Since ninety-seven per cent of all Canada's natives don't finish grade twelve, the vast majority of this group have been effectively kept out of any jobs requiring that level of educational certification. In the Northwest Territories this includes most government posts.

The formal education system was presented to the Dene as the passage through which anyone could enter the "mainstream of society". To marginal people, such a promise means access to the rewards the society has to offer--rewards that come in the form of material benefits, social mobility, and status.

The young were promised all of these as they passed through the rhinestone-studded gates of the formal education system into the real world. Unfortunately, their membership in the very cultural group whose values they had tried to displace with "modern" and "practical" values propounded in schools has barred them from the rewards the system promised. Young native workers typically occupy the lowest labour positions in any northern industrial operation. Advancement beyond that level almost never occurs. In the reversal of the proverbial cowboy movie scenerio, it is the Indians who have been cut off at "the pass".

Native youth who have tried to make a new life for themselves in YellowKnife or Calgary often return to their own settlement with all too familiar and tragic stories to tell. Upon their return they find that although the settlement is home, there is nothing for them to do there that promises to yield the rewards formal schooling had insisted would be forthcoming. They are the in-between generation who fit neither in traditional Dene society nor in white industrial society.

At first, it was among this group that the large bulk of social pathologies became manifest such as anomie, frustration, social violence, petty crime, drug abuse, alcoholism, and suicide. Often youth in this category were unwilling or unable to participate in bush-resource harvesting activities and so constituted an economic burden for their families.

But there was also a spiritual burden borne by the entire community. A serious indirect consequence of the formal education syndrome is that a cancerous feeling of hopelessness invaded the entire society. The older generation could not see a bright new future in the faces of its youth. Instead it saw confusion, chaos and general aimlessness. This vision bred for a period of years a chilling uncertainty in the wisest of elders which called all values, old and new, into question. The community began to believe that the game was already lost, and so many of the people (though never all) gave up the struggle for renewal. Even among the older people, a dismal cloud of despondency set in. Alcoholism became rampant. Family strife and violence became commonplace. People spent less and less time on the land. Cultural root-rot had set in.

It was out of this condition, like a phoenix from the ashes, that the Dene Nation Movement was born. Interestingly, many of its prime promotors, in the early days, were some of the most "successful" products of the formal education system. These individuals turned their backs on the promises of the whiteman and began to search for the now obscured path of authentic development for the Dene people. In the forthcoming chapter we will examine the growth of that movement and some of the effects it has already had on the Dene people.

V. A NATION RISES

A. Origins Of The Dene Nation Movement

The Dene were completely self reliant before the white man came, and for the most part remained so until after World War II. Though it may seem self-evident it is important to underscore this fact because the crux of the Dene struggle today is their effort to break a dependency relationship and to again be a self-reliant people.

Andre Gunder Frank [1969], Rodney [1972], Fanon [1963] and others have pointed out that all societies were developing at various speeds, or were stabilized, depending on local conditions,and that intrusions by European or other peoples introduced a new direction of change--underdevelopment. Underdevelopment as used here means inhibiting the normal development process for the benefit of the intruder and at the expense of those intruded upon.

The very idea that a whole people could be surreptitiously manipulated into subjugation, uprooted culturally, stripped of their history, deprived of their own institutions of government, and forbidden access by law to their own resourse base was so totally alien to Dene thinking that no strategy in their traditional context could have prevented underdevelopment from occuring.[13]

In the late 1960s a quantum leap in consciousness took place among the Dene. It was as though a whole people were waking up after a night of confused dreams. For the Dene, the world was now dividing into two distinct groups of people: Dene and Non-Dene; us and them.

Between 1960 and 1965 young prople from across the Territories were able to meet and compare notes about conditions in various settlements. This movement of youth often took place in the context of residential schools. These young Dene were for the most part English-speaking and very influenced by the events that were occuring among youth all over the world, and especially in the United States. Those were the days just after the Alabama and Mississippi Civil Rights marches; days which witnessed the eruption of a popular youth sub-culture now referred to as the "Hippies"; days when the generation of Americans that had dutifully fought in World War II and Korea watched in amazement as their children organized a mass movement to put a stop to the American military actions in Vietnam.

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[13] The cultural defencelessness of the Dene in the face of colonial intrusion reminds me of my first cariboo hunt on the Porcupine River near Old Crow Flats in the Yukon.

I positioned myself on a bluff a full mile away on an open area beside the river. Soon a small group of cariboo drifted into the area. I opened fire but my shots fell wide of their mark, first too far to the right, then low, then high. The cariboo were confused and frightened. Their defense was the only defense they had ever known; they grouped, the young and the females on the inside of the circle, the outer ring of which was formed by bulls, their horns bent low and menacing. Had their attackers been a pack of wolves, this strategy would have been more than adequate. Against a gun however, it was the worst of all possible strategies.

1967 was Canadian Centennial Year, and there were many youth exchange programmes in the Northwest Territories which enabled Dene young people to travel, often for the first time in their lives, to many of the settlements in the Territories. They saw with their own eyes that what they had hoped might simply be a perverted social fluke in their own settlement was in fact the generalized condition of the Dene people in the Northwest Territories. They saw rampant alcholism and many other social pathologies. They listened to the defeated expressions of hopelessnes from many of the people. They also listened to the elders.

Every Dene community in the Territories had (and still has) a recognized group of older people (usually, but not always men) whose collective sanction constitutes the ultimate political authority in the Dene traditional system of government. This group of elders is never constituted as an official body, does not hold regular meetings, and could not even be called an institution in the usual Euro-Canadian form or sense of the word. It is a council of the wise. Their power rests primarily on their ability to mirror accurately the concensus of the community.

In the early 1960s frustrations began to mount in Dene settlements. We have seen in Chapter IV how many, but especially two prongs of the colonial presence aggravated Dene fears that their world was being destroyed, and that its alleged replacement was in fact a deceptive mirage behind which lurked a myriad forms of Euro-Canadian domination and even possible extinction of the Dene culture.

We have seen how the colonizers promised full participation in the life of the Canadian nation to the Dene people. This was to include educational opportunities, economic advancement and a political voice in the future. It soon became clear, however, because of the puppet nature of the political forms imposed on the Dene, and because of the consequences formal schooling brought, that the road to "full participation" was blocked. There was no possible way for Dene people to achieve social, economic and political parity with the rest of Canada. It became evident that parity was never a serious goal of the colonizer's plan. Rather, their stated intention was to proletarionize the Dene in order to facilitate "Northern Development" (as in the development of oil, gas, lead and zinc, uranium and other resources).

There were few jobs (except government make-work programmes) for these youth who had been indoctrinated by their schooling experience to reject traditional Dene life ways. Hence there was for them a kind of frustration born of the experience of being trapped in socio-economic limbo that has parallels in many third-world countries. A disenchanted, disenfranchized educated element in a colonized population has often provided fruitful ground for revolutionary or messianic sentiments. Three catylists are needed to spark the reaction: 1. an ideology that explains how things come to be as they are in terms of the domination of one people by another; 2. a genuine identification with the masses; and 3. a concept of a better future.

For these Dene youth frustrations were very real, but the identification with their Dene roots was somewhat obscurred by the conditioning imposed during the schooling process. It would be difficult to overstate the importance, indeed the key role, played by Dene elders during the 1960s in helping young people to make the connection between the mobilized social conscience of North American youth which had captured the imaginations of so many young Dene, and the appalling social reality of life in the settlements. By establishing personal relationships with some of the most dynamic and insightful of the youth, elders in Dene communities across the territories planted the seeds of a new social awareness which was later to give rise to a fully fledged identification with their Dene past and the present plight of the Dene people.

That this interaction occurred, and that it was significant, is testified to by every activist in the Dene movement today. In interviews with Dene leadership, this connection is referred to repeatedly. In almost religious fashion one respondant referred to elders in the way religious students refer back to their master teachers: "We act for them. We do not act on our own. Do you think we young people are the real leaders of the Dene people? No, when a man is young he carries the water and chops the wood. All his life he does this. When he is older he gets those who are younger to carry water and wood for him. We (the executive) are the young men chopping the wood and carrying the water for the elders. Nothing, nothing, nothing, happens in Dene communities without approval of the elders."[from the author's field notes July 1980][14]

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[14] This statement obviously requires interpretation. Further research is needed to substantiate both its validity and the actual patterns of social relations that have grown up in Dene communities since the move to settlements. Such a study would necessarily be ethnographic in nature and would constitute a detailed research project in its own right.

While it is clear that the elders play a key role, it is also clear that much does occur in the community which contradicts the wishes of the elders. The social pathologies of alchoholism and family breakdown are, for example, patterns which defy the wishes of any one with any sense. In several of the communities visited during the present study the elders were clearly at odds with each other, as well as with the younger innovators serving on settlement or band councils.

What is interesting in these cases is that these particular settlements were stymied - i.e. unable to progress, unable to achieve even the minimum of cooperation. The general consensus seemed to be that when the elders agreed, the band council would know how to proceed and things would return to normal.

It is my view based on some 45 in-depth interviews conducted during two research trips to the Northwest Territories (July 1980, April 1981), as well as on my own observations, that the general aims of the Dene Nation Movement do indeed embody the vision and wishes of the Dene elders. The national and regional assemblies have a high degree of participation of elders. Yet there is also a tension that exists, and has existed since the formation of the Brotherhood. Young Dene activists, especially those working in central office in Yellowknife, tend to be English-speaking, educated and political in orientation. They behave as though the Dene Nation were solely a political movement. To the elders this attitude signals a cultural cooptation. To the elders, the roots of Dene values lie in the everyday lives of the people in the communities and in the land. The Dene nation is to them an instrument for protecting and promoting those values. The great gap

[14]

When young people encountered the social realities of the settlements and felt moved to respond, it was with the sanction, indeed the guidance and the urging, of the elders that they did so. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that this took place in any conspiratorial sense, or that at this early stage there were secret meetings and dark plans being laid. This would be quite alien to the Dene way of doing things. Individual autonomy was valued so highly that it would have been difficult for an observer on the scene in those early days to realize the full import of what was happening.

What surfaced was a social action movement that began calling attention to the problems and injustices in the community. Most energy at this point was given over to the task of trying to persuade the government to take action to alleviate some of the tension that existed.

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[14] (cont'd)between elders and activists lies in methodology. Everyone seems to agree on what is to be sought, but the tensions lies in the process of securing those goals.

Perhaps the most visible expression of this tension within the Dene Nation movement is the continual stress between centralist and decentralist forces. The centralists argue for Dene unity and a strong nation and the decentralists insist the only justification for the existence of the Dene Nation movement is to protect the interests of the people who live in the 26 Dene communities spead out across the western part of the Northwest Territories. The community-rooted perspective is clearly the one taken by the elders. The centralists pay lip service to it but often find themselves caught up in their own perspective which is basically bureaucratic and political.

This social action was filtered through one of several organizations. The Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada and the Company of Young Canadians, as well as some smaller church-based organizations, provided institutional umbrellas, money, and access to the media. Involvement of Dene youth in these organizations provided needed experience in organizational dynamics, exposure to the Euro-Canadian political system, and in general acted as a training ground which later proved invaluable to the Dene cause.

Within the context of these organizations, and especially through a small group of white radical intellectuals unwittingly imported by the Territorial Government Department of local government, some of the now socially aroused Dene youth were exposed to the ideas of Marx, Lenin, Nyrere, Mao, Cabral, Freire, Castro, Fanon, and other revolutionary thinkers. While the idealogical framework of the Marxist writers was never uncritically accepted, it did apparently provide the Dene with analytical tools which helped them to understand the historical forces leading up to colonial presence in the North. It also helped them to see the world in a dialectical perspective, which meant that the direct causal connections between the colonial presence and the conditions in the communities became clear.[15]

Another important factor that contributed to the awareness of the Dene people was the Pearson administration Land Claims Commission. During 1964 and 1965, a federal government representative was sent to all the communities to discuss with the people the unresolved portions of treaties 8 and 11. Specifically, these treaties promised reserves for each band.

"And His Majesty the King hereby agrees and undertakes to lay aside reserves for each Band..." [from the text of Treaty 11 cited in Fumoleau 1977:167]

This had never been done in the North. Indeed it had never before been clear to the Dene that the government and not the Dene who are now the "legal owners" of the land. Until this time it was generally believed that the land was for everyone's use because the Dene had agreed to permit the white man to share the Territories with the Dene. That was the perception of most Dene. When the land claims negotiator began raising the issue in the communities it soon became clear that in fact the Indians (from the government's point of view) had agreed to

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[15] Further research is needed to determine the nature and the degree of influence Marxist thinking has had on the Dene movement. At various times in its ten year history, the Dene nation has hired southern Canadian advisors, some of whom were decidedly Marxist in their orientation (for example Peter Puxley, Wilf Bean, Steve Ibenson, Mel Watkins, Michael Asch and others). What is unclear is whether Dene thinking was markedly influenced by these individuals and the ideas they imported, or if what the Dene were saying (coming out of an Athapascan linguistic milieu) found its most accurate English expression in Marxist terms.

"cede, release, surrender and yield up to the government of the Dominion of Canada for His Majesty the King and his sucessors for ever, all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever to the land ..." [from the text of Treaty 11 cited in Fumoleau 1977:166]

Perhaps this realization, more than any other, shook the Dene people to their roots. The land "is our life", they told the negotiator. The answer they received was a legalese regurgitation of the treaty terms.

The Indian-Eskimo Association and the C.Y.C. both assisted in the conduct of preliminary research into the meaning of, and the historical circumstances surrounding, the signing of the treaties. Young Dene were involved in this enterprise, and were greatly influenced by the suggestions made by these organizations that effective communication links, and eventually a Pan-Indian political organization, had to be set up in the North to fight for the rights of native people.

We have stated that in colonial situations in Africa, South America and Asia, revolutionary and messianic movements have often emerged out of a particular category of persons. Among the Dene also, there were Those members of the colonized group who were educated, but at the same time were cut off from the reward structure of the society; unable to collect on the promises made to them by their colonizers, and yet disenfranchised from the traditional roles in the Dene community by their own semi-acculturated values.

We have also argued that three catalysts are needed to transform the latent potential to a social fact:

11.

An idealogy that explains how things came to be as they are in terms of the domination of one people over another. We may add that the ideology suggests strategies to remedy this situation.

12.

A genuine identification with the masses. In this case this would mean that Dene young people would have to overcome their indoctrination which denegrated the traditional Dene culture. They would have to perceive themselves as Dene, working for the best interests and with the consensus support of the Dene people.

13.

A vision, however blurred, of a better tomorrow.

By the late 1960s all three of these requirements had been met. To review;

1.

The elders (who reflect the will of the people) expressed their concern to some of the most promising young Dene and helped them to see that their roots were Dene roots and the plight of the Dene people was their plight.

2.

Social awareness was aroused in young people responding to a generalized North American youth movement that addressed such issues as civil rights and war. This awareness was focussed on the Dene settlements.

3.

An ideological framework was acquired (though not fully developed) through social protest and political work in the Indian-Eskimo Association and the C.Y.C. Exposure during this time, and later to the ideas of various revolutionary thinkers, provided analytical tools for understanding the colonial process for what it is.

4.

The government-initiated land claims hearings aroused fear and anxiety in the communities. For the first time the Dene people, en masse, began to realize they had been robbed.

5.

The elders remembered the past. The young activists saw in the stories and explanations of the elders the vision of a new society that would somehow capture the best of the new world and fuse it with Dene values to create a new life for the Dene people. Regaining control of the land through a land claims settlement was seen as the door to that future.

Things were ripe for the formation of a Territories-wide Indian organization that was destined to become increasingly radical in its style of operation in its attempt to defend and advance the cause of Dene self-determination.

The Formation of the Indian Brotherhood

In 1969 efforts were made to form a native peoples political organization in the Northwest Territories which would include all Dene (status and non status Indians), the Metis people and the Inuit. This effort collapsed, largely because the federal government successfully lobbied various groups to remain separate, convincing them that their own interests would best be served if they spoke for "themselves". Funding was given on this separate group basis. The obvious effect of this manoeuver was a weakening of the capacity of peoples in the North to extricate themselves from the control of the colonial bureaucracy. The govenment's intent in funding native groups was to enhance political "development" along the lines encouraged by colonizers the world over. This "development" is aimed at converting local populations to the political forms appropriate in a liberal-democratic capitalist society, subdivided endlessly into rival factions by the colonizers' "divide and rule" strategy.

In 1970 the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories was formed with Roy Daniels, a former C.Y.C. volunteer,as president. Daniels was soon replaced, however, by James Wah-Shee, another former C.Y.C. volunteer. Apparently Wah-Shee's leadership had the approval and full support of the chiefs and the elders, while Daniels had been selected for the presidency by a small handful of movement activists. The stated objectives of the Brotherhood were as follows;

"a. To uphold the rights and interests of the Indian peoples of the Northwest Territories, in reference to the treaties and otherwise; b. To develop, discuss and promote the policies for the Indian peoples of the Northwest Territories; c. To conduct, foster and support programmes and policies for the economic, social, educational and cultural benefit of the Indian peoples of the Northwest Territories; d. To give voice to the opinions of the Indian peoples of the Northwest Territories; e. To cooperate with other organizations of similar or friendly purpose." [In Native Press, May 1972, cited by Lorie 1974:284]

However innocuous these objectives may seem, their framers were not merely reflecting the liberal values of reformers in the white society. One researcher documents the following statements made by three of the leading figures in the Brotherhood at its inception.

"The white man has taken our land and gives us a little welfare to keep us quiet. We didn't give our land or our rights away, and we want them back.

Our people are forgetting what it means to be Indian. We are losing our culture and our language and it is time to do something about it."

We are treated like second- class citizens in our own land and we are going to change this." [Lorie 1974:286]

From the Dene point of view the primary mandate of the Brotherhood was the formation of a Dene land claims position. In order to accomplish this, an organization was established with an executive staff and a suite of offices in Yellowknife. None of this, however, was the fruit of the mass movement.

While there was fairly universal support for the aims of the Brotherhood, nothing like a nationalist movement existed in 1969. On the contrary, settlement people tended to view the young, educated, English-speaking Indians as having been co-opted by the white man. Though Wah-Shee and his organization worked for the Dene cause, a process of conscientization was required to connect the activities of the Brotherhood with the ordinary Dene in the settlement.

There were obstacles which had to be surmounted. One of these mentioned above was that Brotherhood leadership is not synonomous with traditional Dene leadership, which tended to be bush-oriented, Athapascan speaking and older. Another obstacle was the fact that most of the original executives and staff came from the Yellowknife and Fort Rae areas, which have primarily Dogrib populations. The other groups tended to view the Brotherhood (at first) as a Dogrib organization.[16]

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[16] As mentioned above there has always existed a tension between the mode of operation of young movement activists and the ideas on how the movement should proceed arising out of the communities and the elders. Also, as previously stated, there was, and still seems to be, fairly unanimous agreement on goals and principles despite these tensions.

The first task for the Brotherhood was to establish credibility in the eyes of the Dene people. One is tempted to ask why the elders did not simply give their approval to the idea, as it was they who had urged the youth to channel all their energies into Dene-oriented activities. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that the Brotherhood would ever have been formed, had the elders not given it their approval. But sanction to proceed with the formulation of the Brotherhood is not at all the same as a blanket decree telling the settlement people what to think about it. That is not the Dene way. The Brotherhood would have to prove itself to the people. In 1972 a restructuring of the Brotherhood organization took place which created a governing board consisting of the president and vice president of the elected executive and five chiefs to be elected on a regional basis.

This move helped to cement the ties of the Brotherhood organization with the existing leadership structure in the communities. Brotherhood executive members travelled extensively across the western part of the Territories to keep in close contact with the entire Dene population. As well, the executive had to win over the support and confidence of the people. Often this was done by attempting to link local or regional issues to overall Brotherhood aims. Gradually people in the settlements began to perceive the Brotherhood as a buffer organization capable of translating the wishes of bush-oriented people into rhetoric and political action that could negotiate with the forces of colonialization.

Once the Brotherhood was exstablished it was able to receive federal funding in much the same way as Indian organizations in southern Canada do. With this money the Brotherhood began the arduous task of building a solid organization. Brotherhood activities at this time included:

1. Organizing regional and territorial chiefs' conferences and assemblies, or meetings of all the people to promote feelings of unity, and to facilitate discussion on common problems;
2. Research related to aboriginal rights, treaties, and land settlements;
3. Organizing Dene opposition to a proposed oil pipeline until all land and treaty disputes had been resolved. [Lorie 1974;288]

Always a balance had to be struck between immediate local concerns and larger overall issues, the resolution of which would eradicate the source of many local problems. Brotherhood staff had to split their attention continually between the general war and the particular battle, in order to win and maintain the support of the people in the settlements. This tension continues to exist in the Dene nation movement today. A harried executive may be in the midst of a crucial negotiation meeting with the Minister of Indian affairs and then be called out to settle an altercation over the killing of a duck between the Wrigley Band and the R.C.M.P. Raising conciousness, Dene Nation activists are learning, can be a very long and painful process.

Remember that the Dene have sustained an attack which threatened their very existence as a people.

"Can you believe that we Indian people are now living the way we have chosen to live? Can you really believe that we have chosen to have high rates of alchoholism, murder, suicide, and social breakdown? Do you really think we have chosen to become beggers in our own homeland?" [Phillip Blake in Watkins 1977:6]

To raise the rallying cry of Dene unity and to initiate the process of cultural consolidation leading to increased political awareness was indeed an appropriate strategy to combat the forces closing in on the Dene. This was not a realization that the entire Dene nation came to en masse, however.

Indeed, the struggle to instill this critical awareness among the Dene in all twenty-six communities in the Northwest Territories contributed much to the forging of what we are now calling the Dene nation. Perhaps for the first time in their history, it had become necessary for the aboriginal people living in the Mackenzie area to declare to themselves and to the world that "we, the Dene..." are a people. As such, say the Dene, we share a common heritage, common language, and a common territory. Interestingly, western concepts of the origins of nationhood conform to this same pattern.

Land Claims

In 1973 the Metis and Non-Status Native Association was formed to represent the Dene who were not recognised by the Canadian government to be "Indians" because they had not signed treaties eight or eleven. Both organizations, the Brotherhood and the Non-Status Association, were committed to forming a joint land claims proposal.

Also in 1973, a group of Dene chiefs applied to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories for permission to file a Caveat on 450,000 square miles of land which, if granted, would prevent any transfer of land to be made without Dene permission. In effect, the Dene were saying that they had prior claim to a a large portion of the land which Canadians referred to as the Northwest Territories. The Caveat application was the first major test of Dene strength. [McCullum 1977:11] Efforts were made by the Crown to prevent the case from being heard on jurisdictional grounds. This failed. The hearing began and proved to be one of the most facinating in legal history. Judge William Morrow explained the precise legal role the hearings were to play.

"As I see my function, I am to look for a prima facie situation or a situation which may promise a possibility of a claim, at such a point, if reached I must then stop. It will be for some other tribunal to make the in-depth analysis of the evidence, to rework the same ground, and to make the final assessment." [Morrow 1973:7-8]

In other words, the Dene were requesting to file a caveat, which means they had to prove that they had reasonable grounds for laying a previous claim on a land covered by their caveat. That land, as we have stated, was in effect the entire Mackenzie drainage area which amounts to approximately 450,000 square miles of land. Several trans-national corporations were already speaking publicly about oil and gas pipeline routes and had greatly increased their exploration activities in the delta. The effect of granting the caveat would be that the Dene would have to give permission before the oil consortia could carry on their activities in the Mackenzie region. No land in the caveat area could be transferred without Dene consent. The political implications of this would be enormous, both for the Dene and for the government of Canada. To name a few of these implications it would:

1.

Greatly strengthen the Dene land claims position.

2.

Shed serious doubt on the validity of Treaties eight and eleven.

3\.

Effectively put this political concern of people (the Dene) before the economic aspirations of some of the largest trans-national consortia in the world, as well as before the Ottawa government.

4\.

Cast serious doubt on the federal government's stand vis-a-vis Quebec and possibly Alberta, because the concerns of the local population would take precedence over the "national interest" as defined by Ottawa.

5\.

Help to re-define the meaning of "northern development" in Canada, placing human beings on a higher priority than geo-economic concerns.

Judge Morrow brought the proceedings to the people. For 6 months he took his court up and down the Mackenzie delta, hearing evidence in Slavey, Louceoux, Dogrib, Hare and the other local Athapascan dialects. When it was not possible for key witnesses to come to the place where court was being held because of sickness or old age, he took the court into those peoples' homes. He heard the testimony of old people who had actually been present in 1921 when the treaty parties conducted their proceedings in the various settlements.

Council for the Caveators presented their submissions under 6 seperate categories. These categories constituted the building blocks of the Dene land claims position. These arguments may be summarised as follows:

1.

The Dene have used and occupied the caveat area "hereafter referred to as the land" from time immemorial.

2.

Long before the advent of the Euro-Canadian to Dene land, the Dene had been organized in distinct groups constituting a society with clearly defined patterns passed on from generation to generation.

3.

An indigenous people have a legal title to land if they were in occupation of that land prior to colonial entry into that area.

4.

Treaties eight and eleven could not constitute a legally binding agreement "extinguishing" Dene ownership of land, because the Dene made no such agreement with the treaty parties. All that was spoken of was promises of mutual friendship, promises relating to wildlife, annuities and relief. The written versions of the treaty do not conform with the verbal agreements actually made. The alleged Dene signaturees of the treaty were illiterate, and could not understand the contents or legal impications of the document they were given to sign.

5.

Therefore the Dene have a legal right to the ownership of the land and are protecting that right by filing a Caveat. [Morrow 1973]

Numerous testimonies were heard which cast serious doubt on the validity of treaties eight and eleven. For example, Julien Yendo, then a perfect specimen of health at the age of 90, told the court at Fort Wrigley how his name on the treaty was a forgery, in as much as he had not even been present when the treaty party came through. Johnny Jean-Marie Beaulieu, eyewitness to the treaties signing at Fort Resolution, testified that

"When Chief Snuff appeared to be holding out...he was told by the Treaty Party, 'we will pay out the Treaty to you here and it has no binding on the your land or country at all. It has nothing to do with the land'." [Morrow 1973:46]

A full detail of the Morrow decision and a discussion of the issues raised would lead us into legal back alleys, the illumination of which, though interesting, would not contribute greatly to the overall goal of this thesis.

Suffice it to say that Judge William Morrow handed down a favourable decision to the chiefs' request for permission to file a caveat. His decision was based on examination of the questionable circumstances under which Treaties eight and eleven were made, on relevant sections of the British North America Act (especially section 146), on the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and the Dominions Land Act of 1872 and 1908. In the conclusion of his decision, Judge Morrow stated:

"I am satisfied that those same indigenous people (the Dene)...are prima facie owners of the land covered by the Caveat"

and that

"...there exists a clear constitutional obligation on the part of the Canadian Government to protect the rights of the indigenous peoples in the area covered by the Caveat." [Morrow 1973:56]

Early in 1974, before the Brotherhood began gearing up for the land claims negotiation with the federal government, the government had boldly stated its readiness to negotiate land claims settlements with Indian peoples whenever the Indians were ready to do so. It was clear to the Brotherhood that the caveat victory afforded no genuine protection of Dene rights. What was needed was a lands claim settlement that would enshrine those rights in law. By the time Morrow's decision was publicized, the crown had already launched an appeal against the caveat order. This appeal was eventually granted on grounds that a Caveat could not be filed on "crown land". This absurd decision blithley begged the entire question of aboriginal title to that same land. The question of aboriginal rights was not raised in the appeal case. Technically the Dene were back at square one. Yet a victory had been won because it was now clear that before the law, there was reason to doubt the validity of the Treaties, and a good case to be made for Dene ownership of their traditional lands.

Perhaps the greatest net result was the satisfaction in the minds of the Dene that the land is theirs and that returning control of those lands to the Dene was an objective that must be actively and vigourously persued.

By 1973 the Metis and Non-Status Indian Associations had already been formed to represent those native people not included in Treaties eight and eleven. The Morrow ruling was handed down in the fall of 1973. By the early spring of 1974 the Brotherhood and the Metis and Non-Status Indian Association had agreed to hold an Assembly to formulate a joint land claims proposal.

This historic assembly was convened at Fort Good Hope, a tiny settlement situated on the Mackenzie River, very near the Artic Circle. Delegates from all twenty-six of the settlements were present. Discussions were conducted in the traditional Dene manner. (See description in Chapter Two on Dene Government.) On June 2, 1974, after five days of discussion, the unanimous concensus was reached that one land claim for all Dene (status and non-status) and Metis people would be made. The substance of that claim, it was decided, was to be virtually the same as that of the Caveat ruling plus a demand that the Canadian Government formally recognize the Dene claim to ownership (aborignal title) of the 450,000 square miles covered by the Caveat.

A joint (Dene-Metis) land claims committee was formed and the government was served notice that the Dene were ready to negotiate. Delegates were told that a "long hard struggle lies ahead". The slogan "land and unity" was adopted.

Negotiations did actually begin, but the removal of the caveat by an appeal which reversed the Morrow decision had opened the door for the large energy consortiums to continue their secret efforts to convince the government to permit the construction of a massive oil and gas pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley.

In 1975 it was announced by the federal government that two separate applications had been filed containing two different proposals to build pipelines in the Mackenzie Delta. The applicants (Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd., and Foot Hills Pipelines Ltd.) differed in that Arctic Gas proposed to pipe Alaskan and Canadian gas up the valley, while Foothills sought to pipe only Canadian gas.

The government established a public hearing mechanism called The Mackenzie Valley Piple Line Inquiry, and appointed Mr. Justice Thomas R. Berger of the Supreme Court of British Columbia to conduct the hearings. All interest groups ranging from the oil companies to the Indians were to be permitted to be heard as to whether the applications should be accepted.

The appointment of Mr. Justice Berger, one time president of the British Columbia New Democratic Party, is doubtless to be seen as a result of a concession to the federal NDP by the minority Liberal Government of that day

(1974).

The Dene were stunned. The government had appeared conciliatory and Native negotiators had felt that great progress was being made toward reaching an agreement in principle. Now that same government, in seeming disregard for the substance of those negotiations, was publicly entertaining the possiblity of permitting an industrial project which the Prime Minister was billing "the largest project of private enterprise ever planned for Canada". This project was to be undertaken on the very lands the Dene were claiming as their aboriginal homeland.

The Dene Declaration

The Federal Government began exerting steadily increasing pressure on the Dene to come up with a "satisfactory" (to the government) land-claims position. This was not something that could be accompished, within the Dene cultural context, without reference to the local communities.

In July of 1975, some four months after the Berger inquiry began, two hundred and fifty delegates from twenty-six communities representing Metis, Non-Status and Treaty Indians congregated at Fort Simpson (at the confluence of the Mackenzie and Liard rivers) to decide how to respond to the pipeline proposals and the government pressure for a "reasonable" land claims position.

An historic document beginning with the words "We the Dene of the N.W.T. insist on the right to be regarded by yourselves and the world as a nation" was formulated and passed unanimously at the Fort Simpson Assembly. The significance of this document is far reaching. The Brotherhood became known as the "The Dene Nation." Its guiding vision became the achievement of no less than the establishment of a sovereign territory within the context of Canada, completely extricated from the clutches of colonial control. In the words of current Dene Nation President, George Erasmus,

> "In 1974...in Fort Good Hope, we formally rejected the concept of a 'land settlement' which would extinguish our rights. We agreed to work together as one people--as Dene.
>
> In 1975...In Fort Simpson, we passed the Dene Declaration. We publicly declared what we have always known to be true--that we are a nation of people with the right to self-determination. More important, the Dene Declaration is the expression of our collective decision after years of colonialism to resist further assimilation and instead to struggle to regain our freedom as a people." [in Watkins, 1977:179]

The Minister of Northern Affairs called the Dene Declaration "gobbledygook" and a "separatist document". Yellowknife civil servants asserted that "white radicals" hired by the Dene as "advisors" had framed the Declaration. Yet, the Dene who were present at Fort Simpson have consistently testified that the Dene Declaration was the fruit of intense deliberation by the delegates and constituted on accurate mirror of sentiments and aspirations of the Dene. What is important for our purposes is to note that an important step had been taken by the Dene on the path of authentic self-development. Now the publicly-agreed-upon objective was not mere social reform to be accomplished by placating the colonial authorities. Now the Dene were insisting on their right to decide for themselves on the speed, mode, and direction of development in their "Northern Homeland." [Berger 1977]

What was born that day in Fort Simpson was no less than a genuine liberation struggle. There can be no doubt that the Dene were sincere in their assertion. Yet what remained ahead was the furnace of struggle wherein the new Dene Nation, capable of uniting and protecting the interests of the Dene people, was to be forged. The following is a reprint of the entire Fort Simpson declaration:

B. Statement of Rights

"We the Dene of the N.W.T. insist on the right to be regarded by ourselves and the world as a nation.

Our struggle is for the recognition of the Dene Nation by the Government and people of Canada and the peoples and governements of the world.

As once Europe was the exclusive homeland of the European peoples, Africa the exclusive homeland of the African peoples, the New World, North and South America, was the exclusive homeland of the Aboriginal peoples of the New World, the Amerindian and the Inuit.

The New World like other parts of the world has suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism. Other peoples have occupied the land--often with force--and foreign governments have imposed themselves on our people. Ancient civilizations and ways of life have been destroyed.

Colonialism and imperialism is now dead or dying. Recent years have witnessed the birth of new nations or rebirth of old nations out of the ashes of colonialism.

As Europe is the place where you will find European countries with European governments for European peoples, now also you will find in Africa and Asia the existence of African and Asian countries with African and Asian governments for the African and Asian peoples.

The African and Asian peoples--the peoples of the Third World--have fought for and won the right to self-determination, the right to recognition as distinct peoples and the recognition of themselves as nations.

But in the New World the native peoples have not fared so well. Even in countries in South America where the Native peoples are the vast majority of the population there is not one country which has an Amerindian government for the Amerindian peoples.

Nowhere in the New World have the Native peoples won the right to self-determination and the right to recognition by the world as a distinct people and as Nations.

While the Native people of Canada are a minority in their homeland, the Native people of the N.W.T., the Dene and the Inuit, are a majority of the population of the N.W.T.

The Dene find themselves as part of a country. That country is Canada. But the Government of Canada is not the government of the Dene. These governments were not the choice of the Dene, they were imposed upon the Dene.

What we the Dene are struggling for is the recognition of the Dene Nation by the governments and peoples of the world.

And while there are realities we are forced to submit to, such as the existence of a country called Canada, we insist on the right to self-determination as a distinct people and the recognition of the Dene Nation.

We the Dene are part of the Fourth World. And as the peoples and Nations of the world have come to recognize the existence and rights of those peoples who make up the Third World the day must come and will come when the nations of the Fourth World will come to be recognized and respected. The challenge to the Dene and the World is to find the way for the recognition of the Dene Nation.

Our plea to the world is to help us in our struggle to find a place in the world community where we can exercise our right to self-determination as a distinct people and as a nation.

What we seek then is independence and self-determination within the country of Canada. This is what we mean when we call for a just land settlement for the Dene Nation." [cited by McCullum 1977:20,21]

C. The Berger Inquiry

The Dene Declaration was passed in July of 1975, some four months after the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry (often referred to as the Berger Inquiry) began. "The Judge", as Mr. Justice Thomas Berger was called by people in settlements across the North, followed the example of Judge William Morrow in the Caveat Hearings. He took the inquiry to everyone of twenty-six settlements in the Territories. For nineteen months the Judge travelled across the North by every conveyance commonly employed in the North to hear the testimony of more than one thousand Dene witnesses.

More formal hearings were also held in larger cities in the North and the South. To these the Dene brought an impressive array of technical witnesses including biologists, ecologists, zoologists, lawyers, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropoligists.

It is possible to make analytical short work of the task of reporting the outcome and consequences of the Berger

Inquiry by simply stating that Judge Berger brought down a report in May of 1977, that recommended that "no pipeline can be built now" because the massive influx of industrial development before a solid cultural, political, social, and economic foundation had been layed by the Dene would destroy the Dene people. [Berger 1977 V2: XXV]

The Berger report [Berger 1977, Vol 1 and 2] articulated Dene fears of what would happen to them if they were not able to determine for themselves what development should mean in northern communities. He also made it clear that a mere settlement of land claims would not be sufficient basis to undertake the larger scale industrial development in the North. Berger called for a ten year moratorium on larger-scale industrial development in the North to give the Dene time to develop "alternate modes of social, economic, and political development in the Mackenzie Valley..." [Berger 1977 Vol 2: XII] He argued that the renewable resources sector had to be given priority during those years.

"If it (the renewable resource sector) is not strengthened and thriving by the time the pipeline is built, native people will not be able to withstand the impact of the pipeline project and all that it will entail." [Ibid:3]

For the newly-emerging Dene Nation, much more than a legal stay of execution had been won. The process of the inquiry may well have been, for the Dene, more important than the visible outcome. In every one of the twenty-six communities where Berger held his inquiry, a great amount of preparation had gone on before he arrived there. Consistent with Dene political norms which insist that people have the right to decide for themselves what they will think and do in any one issue, each of the twenty-six communities, indeed each of the individuals in those communities, was thrust into a process that could not help but unite Dene people across the Territories.

It was by no means an automatic assumption on the part of residents of Jean Marie River or Fort Good Hope or Fort Resolution that they would support the Dene Nation concept as spelled out by the Simpson assembly. Brotherhood executives worked feverishly to organize local "assemblies" or meetings, to generate discussion and eventually to help local communities achieve concensus on what their position would be when they testified before the inquiry.[17] Regional assemblies were called; chiefs' conferences were frequently held, and a continual effort was made to explain the issues to the people through visits to the settlement, special bulletins and the Native Press, a Yellowknife-based native newspaper.

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[17] It should be noted that there were people in many of the communities who favoured the pipeline as they thought it would bring jobs. These people were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the pipeline opponents and Dene Nation supporters. Still, some polarization did occur in some communities. Interestingly, the polarization seems to have had the effect of aiding some communities to define more clearly what the main thrust of community sentiment was.

In December, 1975, James Wah-Shee, long-time president of the Brotherhood, was forced to resign. The entire Dene Nation was plunged into a leadership crisis that was to hamper the progress of Dene nation building for the next five years.

Wah-Shee's administration of Dene affairs was criticized as being too autocratic and divorced from the process of community-level concensus. The internal personality conflicts aside, the delicate balance in Dene society between leaders who require some degree of autonomy to lead, and the people who feel it is essential that anything a leader does should be a reflex of the will of the people, and not simply an action of his own design, is still the major structural tension in Dene political organization.

This tension was reflected in the remarks made by Wah-Shee in a press conference held on November 10, 1975, immediately after he was removed from office.

"I was going to present a proposal to the chiefs and band counsellors that we start to decentralize our resources, finances and decision making processes at the regional and community level, and I suppose that my headquarters staff may have been threatened because the control could not longer rest at the Yellowknife headquarters but would remain at the community level, and this is what I intended to do." [Native Press, November 10, 1975 page 9]

Richard Neryisoo, then Vice-president of the Brotherhood, responded to Wah-Shee's comment. "...Mr. Wah-Shee now suggests that the organization should be decentralized. Why is it that he has never suggested decentralization until now, when he is faced for the first time with a strong board? Indian Affairs has suggested many times that the Brotherhood should be decentralized. Clearly Indian Affairs would much rather not deal with a unified Dene Nation. It would be in the interest of Indian Affairs and the Territorial Government if the unity of the Dene Nation was to be fragmented into regional units." [Native Press, Novembr 10, 1975, page 1]

Wah-Shee's and Neryisoo's comments embody, between them, the essence of the centralist-regionalist tension that is very much the part of Dene Nation internal politics to this day.

The Dene Nation was torn in half by the controversy that ensued. It was not until Wah-Shee decided (at the last minute) not to run for re-election at the Dene National Assembly held in Fort Norman in July, 1976, that the storm was somewhat abated. George Erasmus and George Barnaby as president and vice-president respectively were elected "on a platform of Dene community leadership and a return to the control of Brotherhood's affairs by the Chiefs." [Dene Nation 1976:9]

While the leadership struggle raged on the national level, the communities were meeting and preparing for the Berger Inquiry's visit. All along there had been a feeling (surfacing from time to time) that the activities of the Yellowknife executive were far removed from the crucial affairs that mattered to the local settlements. George Erasmus had been director of the Brotherhood's community development program. The community developmment field workers continued to encourage and assist the Dene on the settlements to discuss and decide the major issues facing the Dene Nation. The net effect of this period was that the people came to realize that the Dene Nation belonged to them and was not a mere concoction of a co-opted leaderhsip. This fact was underscored by the political reality of the day. The national leadership was taken up in a power struggle, and yet the real work of handling the Berger Inquiry could go on. The phrase "we the Dene" was taking on greater and greater significance.

The Agreement in Principle

The Dene Nation had agreed to have an "Agreement in Principle", a document describing in detail the terms of a land claim settlement that would be satisfactory to the Dene, ready by October, 1976. At a special all-chiefs meeting held at Drum Lake in the Mackenzie mountains in the fall of 1976, the text of the "Agreement in Principle" was hammered out after intense deliberations by the chiefs and the newly elected Dene Nation executive. No white advisors were permitted at the meeting. In this way no accusations could be leveled that the Dene were being influenced by "outside agitators".

The Metis Association refused to ratify the document, however, demanding separate status within the Dene Nation which would grant them special veto powers. When the Dene Nation leadership refused to comply with the demand, the Metis Association announced it would not participate in the upcoming national assembly being called to ratify the agreement worked out by the chiefs. Clearly the old rifts were still present, perhaps aggravated by the recent leadership crisis. In any case, the government refused to fund the Assembly, forcing the Dene to go to church groups for money. The "Agreement in Principle" was ratified by the Dene General Assembly. But now the Dene position was weakened by the Metis action. No longer was a joint land claim possible.

The substance of the agreement in principle echoes the Morrow decision and the Dene declaration in demanding constitutional recognition of the Dene claims to sovereignty over the 450,000 square miles of land. The document demanded the right to self-determination, as well as the freedom for the Dene to evolve their own style of political institutions. It also demanded safeguards for Dene language and culture, and the unhampered liberty for the Dene to develop themselves economically without outside interference from southern Canadian interests. The agreement in principle also provided for compensation to be given to whites who sustained losses as a result of the application by the agreements.

In October of 1976, the Dene sent a delegation to Ottawa to present the agreement to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Some two thousand pages of supporting evidence based on research done in preparation for the Berger Inquiry was presented, as well.

The Metro Model and The Agreement in Principle

The Dene's proposed "Agreement in Principle" was presented to the government in October of 1976. During the winter of 1976-77 the Dene conducted intensive negotiations with the then Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Warren Allmand. It was during this period that the Dene also proposed their "Metro Model" for northern development. Basically the Metro Model proposed the following:

1.
The N.W.T. be divided into three separate geographical boundary territories; one for the Dene, one for the Inuit, and one for the native people.

2.
Each territory recognize the political rights of all the citizens regardless of racial origins.

3.
Each territory would have a separate government which would relate to Ottawa as a provincial government.

4.

The powers of these governments would be approximately those of the provinces in the South, vis-a-vis, the federal government.

5.

Each territory would set up a legislature following a model suiting its own cultural preferences.

6.

The N.W.T. Government as it now exists would be dissolved.

7.

The present N.W.T. Council would be replaced by a Metro or United Nations model of government organized to deal with matters, issues, and programmes of common concern. Conflicts of interest would be negotiated in this context.

8.

A joint civil service would be instituted to carry out joint programs. [taken from the Dene Nation's own unpublished Metro Model Proposal.]

Both the Agreement in Principle and the Metro Model were tentatively agreed upon by the Federal Government during the negotiations that winter.

In May of 1977, Berger tabled his report and it appeared as thought a great victory for the Dene struggle towards self-determination had been won.

Then, in August of 1977, that false dawn was eclipsed by a series of events which were to seriously weaken the forward momentum of the Dene Nation movement.

In August, 1977, the federal government reversed the government's position on the Agreement in Principle and the Metro Model, rejecting both proposals out of hand. It was almost as though the Dene were being played along like a fish on a hook until the result of Berger would clear the way for full-blown industrial intrusion in the North. Berger's recommendations for a ten year moratorium on all such development appeared to have taken the federal government and the trans-nationals by surprise.

The government response was to cut all but core funding to the Dene Nation, virtually crippling efforts to develop substantial community development programs.

When pressed for an explanation as to why Dene Nation funding had been cut off, government sources argued (always unofficially) that the Dene Nation does not represent the majority of aboriginal people in the Mackenzie area, and so no longer qualified for funding as a political organization representing all the Dene people.

This, they argued, is demonstrated by the fact that the Metis and Non-Status Association did not ratify the agreement in principal (even though all Metis delegates from the communities attended the assembly and supported the document in defiance of their own leadership).

Another proof pointed to by the colonial bureaucrats was that some Dene wanted the pipeline and their interests were never spoken for by the "Dene Nation". This was true. A tiny minority of Dene living in Yellowknife and a few of the larger towns did favour the pipeline because they wanted jobs. Nineteen months of hearings in all twenty-six communities had made it abundantly clear, however, that the overwhelming majority of Dene people opposed the pipe line, and wanted their leadership to make their opposition known to the government.

One of the most dire consequences of having funding cut off was that the Dene executive was in a sense cut off from its constituency (the people in the settlements) because it could no longer travel extensively or pay for the regular regional and national assemblies so needed to build a sense of national unity (because settlement Dene could not afford to pay for travel and meeting costs). This meant that the old aggravation of the Yellowknife executive being out of touch with communities was likely to be exacerbated. As well, it meant that plans to undertake development projects in local communities had to be scrapped.

The Dene Nation movement had been rapidly developing as a national (across the Territories) political system that had the potential to replace the white civil service as the decision-maker in the settlements. Furthermore, this emerging system was linked to a national movement, the existence of which was obviously antithetical to the aims of the federal and colonial regime. If such a movement were to arise in South Africa, or Brazil, the leadership would quite simply be eliminated.

Here the strategy differed. But the tactical objectives were quite likely the same.

By crippling the Dene organizations through a funding cut, and simultaneously by building a form of "government" that gives the impression of local control without the substance of that control; and especially by removing (temporarily) the threat of a pipeline and the pressure for a land claims settlement--it was believed that the "Dene Nation" would die a quiet, natural death.

It would be sophomoric to cry "co-conspiracy", however. The decentralization-devolution policy of the territorial government was in full swing by the time Berger tabled his report. Also while Federal funding directly to the Dene Nation Political Organization was severely cut Dene were able to obtain interim funding (however inadequate) from church groups and other sources. It is fair to assess a colonial bureaucracy on its own terms. By the mid-seventies, most agencies of the government in the communities (health, education, welfare, housing, local government, etc.) could see the rising aspirations of local people for some measure of control over the forces that affected their daily lives.

Like the war on poverty bureaucrats who kept redefining poverty to fit the programs they were administering, thus justifying their own existence, the various agencies in the Territories sought to demonstrate the viability of their programs in the communities in the face of growing (Dene Nation inspired) opposition to a bureaucracy controlled by foreigners and unresponsive to community needs.

Also, despite claims of ideological neutralilty, the major decision-makers engineering policy for the North were assuredly the exponents of the "linear development model", as well as being the promotors of corporate capitalism as an institutional "solution" for the Dene. The assertion of nationalistic aspirations could not have but been perceived as the rantings of a few misguided radicals who were out of touch with "reality". The fact that Dene Nation negotiators presented the "Agreement in Principle" with any expectation that such an "harangue" could be taken seriously was seen as demonstration enough of the "delusionary preoccupation" of the leadership. Such a leadership was "obviously" out of touch with the true feelings of the Dene people because, as everyone knows, it is the "natural inclination" of men and their societies to move away from traditional modes of adaptation and traditional value systems and towards those socio-economic patterns which characterize industrialized societies.

That the Dene people could actually seek a different path than the one which leads to modernization as defined by southern Canada was an idea that must have seemed nothing short of absurd to well-meaning but very naive bureaucrats in Yellowknife and Ottawa.

What I am saying, in short, is that the fact that the Dene Nation is rooted firmly in Dene traditional values, is guided (at least in broad terms) by Dene elders, and does indeed reflect the true aspirations of most of the Dene people, is simply not a perceivable reality to the colonizers because of the ideological spectacles they wear. To these bureaucrats the Dene Nation as a movement is invisible. Claims that it is a real force originating at the grass roots and seriously contending for sovereign control of the North seems frankly nonsensical to some, and dangerously unrealistic to others.

As to the influence of the Dene Nation movement as it was felt in the settlements across the Territories, the natural administrative assumption was that a liberal reform of the style of government operations in the North was in order because the people had now been readied (through education and training) for a higher degree of participation in community affairs.

Regional land claims packages, job creation schemes, advisor boards which permitted a venting of community views without relinquishing real power to the people, these were all part and parcel of the governments response to the social pressures rising out of the process of the Berger Inquiry and the land-claims issue. An internal document circulated to the staff of the department of local government in 1977 stated

"This administration does not believe that aboriginal people or any other racial or ethnic group in Canada should have the right to form its own constitutional political jurisdiction or racial political unit, as these are incompatible with our constitution, particularly with the universal franchise... Our job has been and must continue to be to make not only local government structures work, but all programs and policies of council and administration, to seek through well-established channels internal to the government of the N.W.T. only those changes to structures which the council of the territories has the authority to make." [Stiles 1979:31,32]

The purpose of the document was to make it clear that political change in the N.W.T. was to come about only through the existing political structures.
"The division is to concentrate on the mechanisms of making local government work and provide services, advice and assistance to the communities and councils..." [Ibid]

The inter-department document was in fact an Ottawa response to a group of employees at the department of local goverment training section who were conducting workshops to strenghten Dene-style government in the communities.[18] It was clearly believed that the best interests of the Dene people were aligned with those of the Canadian Nation--not the Dene Nation.

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[18] For a full description of the controversy that arose between Ottawa and the somewhat radicalized element working for the Government of the N.W.T., Department of Local Government Training Division see "The Baker Lake Affair: In a Case Study From the N.W.T." J. Mark Styles [1979] forthcoming in *"Popular Analysis, Popular Action: Canadadian Readings and Adult Learning for Political Change"*, Ted Jackson anad Bud Hall, editors, International Council for Adult Education, Toronto.

That the interests of southern Canada were in any way exclusive of the interests of the Dene people did not, apparently, occur to the framers of policy for the North. There is one group however (aside from the Dene themselves) who were painfully aware of the exclusivity of interests. That was the multi-national energy consortiums, who had just lost a major skirmish in the Berger Inquiry.

Berger had called for a ten-year moratorium on all large scale industrial development in the North. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Six, the Government of Canada had good reason to give the impression (without ever really committing themselves) that it had accepted Berger's recommendations. At least now it seemed as thought the Dene could work toward a land claims settlement without having to conduct forays into court to beat off the advances of the great corporate dragons whose aim, it appears, is to "devour the land". In October, 1979, and still no closer to a land claims settlement then ever, the Dene published a document called "Recognition of the Dene Nation through Dene government". It is basically a detailing of the form which Dene government could take after a land claims settlement. This document will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven. What is important to note is that despite very great obstacles, the Dene continued to evolve their position on self-determination . This they did in the traditional Dene way, through endless hours of consultation between elders, chiefs, the executives and the people.

The Government's Response to the Agreement in Principle

It is obvious that the notion of a sovereign Dene territory would not please a government already engaged in a sovereignty struggle with Quebec.

Dene sources have insisted that the government actively sought to divide the Dene Nation by encouraging regional land claims (tantamount to accepting reserves as a settlement), and by conducting a campaign to discredit Dene national leadership in the local communities.

However subjective these accusations may seem, there are two objective measures of Ottawa's attitude toward the Dene approach to self-determination as expressed in the "Agreement in Principle". First, as we have already noted, shortly after the Berger Inquiry,the vast bulk of funding was cut off to the Dene Nation, virtually crippling Dene efforts to launch local community development programs.

Second, there was a multiplication of funding and efforts made by the Federal Government to develop their own institutions or appendages in the local communities. A partial list of these institutions includes the settlement councils, local housing administration boards, nurse advisory boards, school advisory committees, and the welfare advisory committees. These bodies all claim to exist solely for the benefit of local residents and indeed they do serve the interests of some people in the short run. Their existence has other consequences, some intended by their originators, others unforseen but no less damaging to the development process.

Also in the fall of 1979, the Conservative Party led by Joe Clark was elected as the majority government in Canada. They held power for only eight months, but during that time several important actions were taken that greatly affected the Dene.

First, in January of 1980, the funding that had been cut off in 1977 was resumed. (This money had always been classified as "loan against land claims".) Second, the governments Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jake Epp, proposed that land claims negotiations be opened and that an early settlement be worked towards (a goal of beginning the negotiations in six months was established).

Delighted with the new developments, Dene leaders launched an all -out program to prepare themselves for land claims negotiations. This preparation included many chiefs conferences and regional conferences, as well as negotiations with the Metis Association, now under the new leadership of Jim Bourque. By the time the annual National Assembly was held in Fort Good Hope (July -August 1981) the ground work had been laid for the negotiations. As well, local community development programs (a DREE grant had funded a community development training school for one year) aimed at raising local awareness on national issues and fostering economic co-operation between settlements had begun. Perhaps most importantly, the Metis and Non-Status Indian Association had announced its intention to rejoin the old alliance with the Dene Nation in seeking a joint land claims settlement.

It was that same Jake Epp, who was encouraging an early land claims settlement in the North, who made the following statement cited in the Introduction to this thesis. "...factors which proved roadblocks to development in the early 1970's--exaggerated concerns over ecological and environmental woes, dangers to native ways of life, and land claims settlements--now seem less a barrier as we move into the 1980's." [cited in the Edmonton Journal,November 13, 1979]

Dene negotiators expressed their concern that the government seemed to be contradicting itself, making one kind of impression in private negotiations with the Dene, and entirely another in public. In private there were constant assurances that Dene rights would be protected. In public, it sounded as though the government was gearing up for something big.

Indeed, they were. On March 24, 1980, Inter-Provincial Pipelines Ltd., (controlled by Imperial Oil Co.) made official application to build a twelve inch pipeline from Norman Wells in the Mackenzie Valley to Zama, Alberta some 500 miles to the south. Simultaneously, Esso Resources Canada Ltd. (owned by Imperial Oil) made application to expand production of the Norman Wells oil field. The government announced that the National Energy Board would conduct hearings to advise cabinet whether or not to permit the construction to go ahead. Clearly, Judge Berger's recommendations for a ten year moratorium on such enterprises in the Mackenzie Area were to be ignored. It was now clear why the Clark government had re-opened land claims negotiations with the Dene. An early resolution of Native Claims would sweep away any "social obstacles" [Epp Ibid] to "Northern Development".

As the National Energy Board Hearings opened, council for the Dene Nation tried to enter the two thousand pages of expert evidence prepared for the Berger hearing. This was denied on grounds that those hearings (Berger) were not related to these, and that the board would only consider evidence that was directed to the "present matter".

Then N.E.B. decision has not yet been announced at this writing. In Chapter 6 we will touch on some of the evidence presented in the hearings, because those hearings are part of the macro-context within which Dene developmnent must take place. That context includes issues such as the energy crisis, the power struggle over resource control between Ottawa and the provinces, and sovereignty association.

In conclusion, it is important to underscore the fact that the development of the Dene Nation movement and the development of the Dene people are inextricably linked. The stark political fact is that the Dene Nation is the only agency in existence actively working for Dene Development.

Every other agency in the North is in some way self-serving, and self-protecting. This fact of bureaucratic life renders government agencies external to the Dene largely incapable of indentifying Dene development priorities with their own. The same applies perhaps in lesser degree to church and other non-government groups. A curious irony in this situation is that like many poor countries in the third world, the Dene will not be able to develop themselves without the help of these self-same agencies.

VI. DENE DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT

If we try to imagine the Dene Nation as a sovereign territory within Canada conducting its affairs with much the same autonomy as Alberta or Newfoundland, our field of vision is soon blurred by the onrushing of a myriad conflicting forces, any one of which could (and would if given the chance) crush the infant nation like an irksome bug.

While the list of contenders for control of the North can be narrowed to a few power actors, a mere naming of these does not begin to tell the whole story. It is possible to concoct any number of scenarios to describe how and why this or that group will eventually seize the known wealth in the N.W.T. All of them involve foreign intervention. As one old Indian put it:

"First, white men come and take all the beaver, then come back and take all the trees. This time they're even back for the rocks." [cited in Kellough 1980:350]

George Erasmus, current executive president of the Dene Nation was interviewed on CBC Morningside (March 26, 1981) about the question of control of resources in the North. The Dene claim that the land, and all that is on it, or under it, should be returned to Dene control. Erasmus quoted John Munro, current Minister of Native Affairs and Northern Development as having "stated" (in a private conversation) that

"There will be no land claim settlement north of the 60th parrallel that will include control of oil and gas resources by native people."

The Dene say that not only do they have the right to the rents derived from oil and gas extraction in their territory, but that they *need* that revenue in order to finance their own economic development program for the North. Their own program the Dene say, will be based on non-renewable and renewable resources and will be diversified enough to provide a reasonable standard of living for northerners long after mineral resources have been depleted.

The great giant at the gates of the Dene Nation (Industrial Society) operates on the progress principle, which in all three of its primary assumptions directly conflicts with the values of the Dene. These three assumptions are:

1.

Nature is an object waiting to be exploited by man.

2.

Man is the pinnacle of evolution, and industrial man is the apex of human development. Thus industrial society is superior to all others, and as social Darwinists argue, the wealthiest and most powerful people are morally justified in seizing the resources of weaker peoples "even at the cost of obliterating so-called primitive societies".

[Toffler 1980:117]

3.
All social life flows progressively forward (progress) toward a "better life" for humanity. Progress becomes the ultimate good, and any price is worth paying to achieve it (especially if someone else has to pay).

This set of assumptions form the "philosophical" underpinnings for orthodox capitalist modernization theory. At the end of World War II when "modernization" became the battle cry of Western capitalist expansionism, the Nation State was perceived to be the essential unit of social, political, and economic progress. The basic power institutions of our society (military, corporate, financial and governmental) are all rather mindlessly pre-programmed to preserve (at any costs) the essential unmitigated sovereignty of a capitalist state. [Panitch 1977:Chapter 1][19] That state (Canada in the case of the Dene) believes that it behaves in its own best interests by promoting the progress doctrine and by squelching any serious opposition to its exclusive control of the means of progress.

Since the industrial nations are hopelessly addicted to petroleum, and cannot in fact "live" without a steady secure supply of it, "progress" and "oil" are directly linked. Hence Alberta's battle with Ottawa over control of oil and gas revenue may be seen as a tug of war motivated by the self-preservation instinct of a centralized nation state, and an emerging regional economic block opting for a more localized type of sovereignty.

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[19] For a more detailed explanation of the role currently being assumed by the Canadian state see Garth Stevenson "Federalism and Political Economy" in Leo Panich, editor, *The Canadian State, Political Economy and Political Power*, pages 92-97, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1977.

If this "ideal type" of political struggle (evolution vs devolution) could serve as an adequate theoretical context in which to discuss Dene development, we could present a case for sovereignty association--Dene Style--and be done with it. The context of the Dene struggle for self-determination is not merely the Canadian political arena and the Canadian economy however. The context is a global one, and the implications of success or failure for the Dene are also global.

A. The Global Context

The Club of Rome is a loosely-associated international group of scholars, scientists, industrialists, statesmen, artists, educators and philosophers who are all outstanding achievers in their own fields, and who all share a common concern for what they perceive to be a global crisis of staggering and bewildering proportions that has engulfed the whole of mankind. The Club of Rome has been studying what they term the "world problamatique" for more than a decade, and have published approximately one major report a year on some aspect of the world economic, ecological, or socio-political crisis. They write:

"Humanity is entering a period of extreme alternatives. At the same time that an era of scientific and technological advancement has brought us unparalleled knowledge and power, we are witnessing the emergence of a "world problematique"--an enormous tangle of problems in sectors such as energy, population, and food which confront us with unexpected complexity. Unprecedented human fulfillment and ultimate catastrophe are both possible." [Botkin et al 1979:1]

The Club of Rome, as well as numerous analysts such as Marshal McLuhen, Buckminister Fuller, and Alvin Toffler are convinced, as I am, that we are living at an extraordinary and critical juncture in human history. We are witnessing the emergence of a new world order. Toffler writes: "A new civilization is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it." [Toffler 1979:24]

We are witnessing, to the dismay of corporate and political leaders, that the old order of things, which had emerged out of the rise of the industrial state (Toffler calls it industreality) is being "rolled up" like an outworn carpet by a maelstrom of forces which no one power center can control. This stupendous process is "tearing our families apart, rocking our economic system, paralyzing our political systems" and "shattering our values"."[Tofler 1979:26]

Among the myriad consequences of this global convulsion several stand out as having direct impact on Dene development efforts. These are:

1. A world energy crisis;
2. The emergence of the trans-national corporation as a kind of floating metropole of economic power beyond the control of nation states;
3. The crack-up of the nation state. This is marked by the emergence of local or regional cultures, political and economic units seeking autonomy from their parent nation state but recognition and participation as an actor on the global stage; and
4. A global values crisis.

These are world conditions. In a sense they are problems but in another sense they are challenges to the ingenuity of man to recreate himself before it is too late. All of these, and other features such as the proliferation of nuclear arms, the use of food as a political weapon, the techno-scientific explosion that has electronically united a mankind still socially unable to carry off the child development equivalent of "parrallel play"--these are part of the behemoth which the Club of Rome calls the "world problematique"

To each of the four critical challenges indicated above, the Dene (perhaps without really realizing) have a solution which they are prepared to implement. What makes the Dene Development question so relevant for anyone concerned about the condition of the world at this time is that the Dene propose solutions which are actually quite universal in their application.

Furthermore, the Dene themselves are probably more prepared and better situated to abandon the modernization mirage and pursue these experimental solutions to the "world problematique" than anyone else in North America. They are not yet completely absorbed by "industriality". They are not utterly dependent upon petroleum and other non-renewable resources. As well, the territory they occupy is still relatively unspoiled (though time is running out on that score).

In short, some of the Dene leaders believe themselve to be the vanguards of a sane way of living on the earth and are prepared to demonstrate the viability of their solutions. While Dene spokesman are not so naive as to gloss over the massive configuration of obstacles facing the Dene people, they are quick to point out that these obstacles by no means exceed, or even approach the dimension of the challenges facing mankind as a whole at this time. Each of the five issues listed above constitutes an important aspect of the macrocosmic context of the Dene struggle.

1. The World Energy Crisis

The energy crisis is first and foremost a crisis within capitalism. While the global supply of petroleum is of course finite, and dwindling, the crux of the problem may be found in the very dynamics of capitalist growth. These dynamics include the following features:

1\.
A need for uninterupted incremental increases in production, consumption, and, of course, profits;

2\.
Competition between capitalist power centres (usually corporations or financial institutions) for access to raw materials, cheap labor, and markets; and

3\.
An increasing dependency on capital-intensive high-powered technology which greatly multiplies research and development costs and new-product-production lead times.

The global political crisis of the 1960s and 70s has wreacked havoc in all three of these areas, but the key to this disruption has been in the area of access to raw materials, cheap labor, and markets. Oil has become the staple necessity of the modern industrial complex. Western nations after World War II swiftly developed an unsatiable appetite for petroleum to power factories, heat homes, run automobiles, and produce electricity. It seemed there would be no end to the supply, and indeed, major oil companies such as Imperial Oil were telling governments as late as

1965 that the known reserves of easy access petroleum would satisfy the needs of the Industrial West for some 900 years. Even as recently as 1972, Imperial was assuring the Canadian Government that "Canada is not out of oil. We have enough oil for several hundred years."

In Canada before the formation of Petro-Canada (the Crown corporation) the only source of information the government had about oil and gas reserves was from the trans-national oil companies. In 1972 these companies were desperate for Canadian oil in U.S. markets to make up for shortages created by the OPEC Revolution.

Around 1970, practically overnight billions of barrels of "known reserves" disappeared from the oil companies estimates. Between 1969 and 1975, crude oil prices leaped from under two dollars a barrel to a whopping twenty dollars a barrel in a rubber-ball market that made the most seasoned analysts dizzy in their attempt to predict its movements. In 1969, Libya imposed significantly higher selling prices and royalties on the American firms pumping profits from beneath the shifting sands of that North African country.

Other oil-producing nations quickly followed suit, and OPEC instantly became a household world in the West. In 1971, the "Teheran Agreements" between the oil producing nations and the trans-national corporations that held a monopoly on production technology, exploration and refining (not to mention markets) was established. These agreements were designed to give the producer nations a bigger cut of the profits. The scope of trans-national corporations in combatting this move was underestimated. For one thing, the U.S. dollar with which the oil producers were paid lost much of its value. As well,

"Rapidly changing oil market conditions and the inflation in the prices of goods imported by the oil exporters created a situation between the companies and their host governments that became increasingly favourable to the latter. The 'Middle East Economic Survey' calculated in September, 1973, that 'the national profit split on realized prices between governments and companies may have changed from 80-120 in the governments favor to around 64-36 in the governments favor now.'" [Richards & Pratt, 1979:218]

In response, OPEC again raised prices. Richards & Pratt describe why OPEC was able to maintain the upper hand over supplies.

"Major changes in the international energy economy underlay OPEC's new bargaining power, and ensured that this power would be enduring. On the demand side, these included the enormous postwar growth in aggregate energy consumption and the shift to the industrialized capitalist block from coal to oil economics. On the supply side, additions of new oil reserves began to fall below demand levels...while alternative energy resources have involved higher costs and longer development times than initially expected." [Ibid:220]

What emerged was a competition between producers (ie. the company) and the exporters (the nation states) for the lion's share of profits. In Canada, an interesting three-way competition surfaced. The producing provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland) are now competing for revenue with the federal government while the oil companies play one bureaucracy off against the other to insure their own super-profit margins. Richards and Pratt argue that

"The interventionist behaviour of the the producing provinces and Ottawa seems to have originated as much in a determination by governments to defend their constitutional prerogatives and powers as in any desire to undercut or to supplant the private sector."
[Ibid:226]

This analysis seems somewhat blind to the recent involvements of all three producing provinces and the Federal Government in the oil and gas industry. In the North, Petro-Can may soon acquire a 50% option on all undiscovered reserves and a 25% option on all undeveloped ones. Control of those reserves which spell revenue for Ottawa is one of the prime reasons why the Federal Government is determined to prevent the Dene (or any other native group) from gaining control of oil and gas resources in the N.W.T.

Bill C-48

At this writing, the federal Liberal majority has pushed a controversial bill through the first reading of the House of Commons. The Bill, C-48, as it is called, would place absolute control of all aspects of oil and gas production (in the North and off-shore) directly under the responsible Minister. No provision is made for royalities to the provinces or territories and no requirements of revenue sharing are contained in the Bill. All native groups in the North, as well the governments of both the Yukon and the N.W.T., have joined together (this alone is an unprecedented occurence) in their opposition to the Bill.

The argument made by the Federal Government for why the N.W.T. and the Yukon are not ready to acquire provincial status is that these territories cannot generate enough revenue to be self-supporting. The northerners reply that it is precisely that revenue which Ottawa wishes to take by means of Bill C-48 that would give them the necessary fiscal base to work from. The energy crisis is, in short, far more than an impending shortage of oil. As one oil company spokesman quipped, "Oil is in the eye of the beholder". For the Dene, control of their own territory, its resources, and the activities of others who would extract those resources seems remote in the view of the competition now being waged between non-Dene for control of the oil and other mineral resources now laying beneath traditional Dene lands. The oil crisis is not, for the Dene, economic, in nature. It is essentially political. It is a question of control.

The Emergence of Trans-National Corporations

That the trans-national oil consortia present one of the greatest, if not the greatest, source of danger to the existence of the Dene Nation is an opinion shared by Dene leaders and most serious analysts of the Dene predicament. [Asch 1978, 1981, Erasmus 1981 Jellies 1977, Watkins 1981] Indeed, the recent threat of another oil and gas pipeline (Norman Wells, N.W.T. - Zama, Alberta) produced a flood of opposition from a host of scholars, as well as church and legal groups supportive of the Dene cause. All of these testified before the National Energy Board hearings held between November, 1980 and February, 1981 as to the unspeakable destruction of a whole people that would result from a large scale industrial project being introduced to the North at this time. As during the Berger Inquiry, the argument was well put that the Dene people need time to develop the institutional base that could contend with large scale industrial development.

Yet, true to form, the companies seem impervious to these pleas and determined to marshall their vast global network of resources towards the singular goal of extracting the mineral wealth of the N.W.T. out from under the feet of the Native people. The reason for this determined effort to gain control of the oil extraction process at this time becomes clear in the light of recent political events in Canada.

First, the North is the only place left in Canada where the corporations can extract super-profits without having to share those profits with, not one, but two, revenue-hungry governments (the provinces and the federal government). Under current legislation covering revenue distribution on resource-industry operations in the N.W.T.,

"Apart from the share of the rent taken by taxation, the companies retain over 85% in the form of excess profits because of rather generous royalties arrangements." [Jellies, in Watkins, 1977: 64]

The federal government had set up a very inviting tax situation for the North "to encourage development". Jellies states that because of this "the major share of the rents associated with Norman Wells crude oil production accrue to the corporate sector". [Ibid:66] Also, directly or indirectly, the majority of resource extraction activities in the the N.W.T. are carried on by American-owned corporations who boldly export some 75% of these super-profits to the United States.

Now two threats loom large on the profit horizon for the trans-nationals. First, the Dene are demanding control of N.W.T. resources, and a mounting alleluhia chorus of voices, including the N.W.T. government, are demanding provincial status (which includes ownership of resources under the B.N.A. Act) for the N.W.T. Secondly, the federal government is making its own move for absolute control of resources and the revenue they bring, through the highly controversial Bill C-48.

The Dene power base is practically laughable in comparison to such incorporated enemies as Exxon or Cominco (Exxon owns Imperial Oil and Interprovincial Pipeline Ltd.).

Exxon is one of the largest capitalist power centers in the world. Its annual sales exceed the gross national products of most countries in the world including Switzerland and Belgium. Exxon boasts of a tanker fleet that is 50% larger than that of the Soviet Union. Working in close colaberation with an enormously complex network of corporations the world over, Exxon holds more assets and wields more power than most governments can ever hope to match. What is more, no government, not Canadian, American, or any other, can control it.

"The Trans-National Corporation (or TNC) may do research in one country, manufacture components in another, assemble them in a third, sell the manufactured goods in a fourth, deposit its surplus funds in a fifth and so on." [Toffler 1979:336]

These floating metropoles of economic power can and do generate hinterland dependencies in a dozen countries playing one off against the other without ever being contained in any significant way by the laws or policies of any nation state.

Enormous transfers of funds, exchanged electronically at the speed of light, keep international money markets out of the control of governments. The best analysts and computer equipment in the world are employed to manage these funds and to literally create more capital through rapid-fire short-term loans which are based on a slim percentage of actual dollars (or Euro-dollars or Yen or Marks) held.

"To glimpse their scale, it helps to know that on a given day in 1971 they (382 major corporations with holdings over $1 Billion) held $268 Billion in short-term liquid assets. This, according to the International Trade Sub-Committee of the United States Senate was 'more than twice the total of all international monetary institutions in the World on the same date'. The total *annual* U.N. budget by comparison represented less than 1/268 or 0.0037 of that amount." [Ibid:337]

The trans-national corporations form a network of power that straddle the globe. They are beyond the control of the most powerful governments on the earth. Their fluid, lateral style of decentralized management and temporary institutional structure which emerges for specific purposes and then dissolves into the web of the 50,000 or more interconnected links between major companies is literally sucking power out of the hands of national governments.[20]

Yet for all their power, these giants are extremely vulnerable. They desperately need the co-operation of governments and local populations to carry on their activities. Theirs is primarily an integrating, managing, manipulating and organizing role. They have no material resources, no labour--indeed no ground to stand on--except that which they purchase from governments or private citizens. They have no armies to protect their assets (though they do have espionage organizations that are on an equal and competitive footing with the KGB or the CIA). In short, they are dependent on the continued goodwill and co-operation of the nation states and the people who live in those states.

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[20] Note the similarity of institutional style between the corporate giants and the traditional Dene. Both are "fluid, lateral and decentralized".

Increasingly, governments are realizing that their own interests and the interests of the trans-nationals are not automatically one and the same thing, and can even conflict. Of course, politicians are vulernable to influence by corporation lobbies, and indeed are somewhat dependent on their direct or indirect funding support for political survival. Yet, recent shifts in public opinion concerning ecology and the human rights of minorities, as well as the increased stress being placed on corporations to behave as responsible citizens, have begun to alter the style of corporate behaviour in North America. There are instances (such as the Berger Hearings in 1977) when the corporations have been forced to bow before a different set of priorities--a different bottom line--than unadulterated profit.

Many corporations are looking for ways of pioneering a link-up between the activities of the business world and the progress of mankind. There are enough important examples of this trend to suggest that there has been a kind of humanistic revolution that has taken place in some corporate board rooms. The question of social accountability weighs heavily on the minds and agendas of some corporate managers.

While thorough review of this trend would take us far afield from the present discussion, a mere listing of a few corporations with active "trans-economic" or "supra-economic" programs will give an indication of the range of this change: IBM Corporation, Hewlett Packard Company, Exxon Corporation, Price-Waterhouse, G.M. Corporation, Ford, G.E., AMPEX, Hatachi, Soni, Toyota, Staeg, Saarbergwerke AG, and Shell Oil. Shell Oil Company lists five overall corporate objectives only one of which spells profit. The other four refer to ecological, social, and public service matters. The company's executives insist that all five goals carry the same weight--if one can believe them. [Toffler 1979:Chapter 18]

That the Dene Nation could turn back the trans-nationals and the revenue-hungry federal government long enough to develop a solid cultural and institutional base from which to negotiate the forces of change does not seem entirely out of the question. The 1980 federal government 's National Energy Policy states:

> "The Native residents (of the N.W.T.)...seek--legitimately--more say in the decisions affecting energy development, and claim--rightfully--that they should enjoy more of the benefits and fewer of the costs from northern resource activity. The Government of Canada, on its own and through its instruments governing private sector activity, will respond to these concerns. The need for frontier resources...is not so great that it must override our social goals and obligations." [Government of Canada National Energy Policy 1980:45]

It is possible that Ottawa will find a convenient lever to exercise control over resource revenue in the North by partially accommodating the Dene demands. The "social well-being of the Dene" may provide a sufficient smokescreen behind which Ottawa can outmaneouver the corporations. In the process, the Dene may be able to negotiate at least a partial sovereignty (excluding oil and gas) over their own territory, supplanted by some form of revenue sharing (some is better than none). The threat posed by the trans-national companies may prove to be a blessing in disguise for the Dene.

Two other scenarios are equally plausible. The corporations may be able to use their technological monopoly and their financial influence to force Ottawa into permitting large scale development in the near future (such as an energy corridor) with tax cushions more favourable to the government than before, but which still permit the exportation of super-profits from the North.

Under the provisions of the proposed Bill C-48 (section 41.1) the government would receive a straight 40% royalty on all profits made by private corporations in oil and gas extraction enterprises. However, if a company discovered oil or gas before December 31, 1980 it may choose any three years it wishes (the most profitable of course) to exempt itself from the royalty tax.

Another scenario, not at all outside the realm of possibility, is that Ottawa could decide to behave as a capitalist entrepreneur. Through a mechanism like Bill C-48 and Petro-Can Ottawa could, in partnership with or even exclusive of all competitors, seize the profits for itself despite social consequences to native people.

Recent massive oil discoveries in the Beaufort Sea (discoveries made as late as 1979, 1980 and 1981) make the questions of an "energy corridor" from the Arctic Sea to refining stations in southern Canada an extremely pressing concern for both the oil companies and Ottawa. If the "social obstacles" could be removed there is no doubt that the cheapest, most efficient, way to get Beaufort Sea reserves to market would be through one or more pipelines.

The proposed Norman Wells - Zama, Alberta line would open a corridor for the southern half of the Mackenzie drainage system and make feasible an extension of that corridor all the way to the Beaufort Sea.

During the recent N.E.B. hearings on the Norman Wells pipeline application, Dome Petroleum Company gave the following estimate of the magnitude of Beaufort Sea reserves.

"Dome forecasts first oil production from the Beaufort Sea region by 1985. The production rate should reach 3/4 million barrels of oil per day (BOPD) by 1990 and rise to 1 1/2 million BOPD by 1995.

Results from thirty-three exploratory wells in the off-shore Beaufort Sea over the past decade provides substantial evidence that giant oil and gas fields exist.

Extensive operational research and engineering conducted during the past decade in this region have developed knowledge and technology which makes production and transportation systems both technically and economical feasible from the off-shore Beaufort Sea. ...using the oil discovery rate achieved to-date in the Beaufort Sea and a correlation developed from North Sea experience relating the number of exploratory wells and the resulting well reserves, the exploratory drilling program now set for the Beaufort Sea will result in the discovery of five billion barrels of oil by 1985 and eight billion barrels by 1990.

There are now three major discoveries in the off-shore Beaufort Sea and it is estimated that 500 million barrels of oil have been discovered on shore.

...the 500 million barrels of on-shore reserves will be commercial when off-shore production and transportation systems are installed for off-shore reserves. These on-shore reserves can contribute one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand barrels per day beginning in 1985." [Dome Petroleum Company Ltd., Supplementary Submission to the N.E.B. Order No. EHR-1-80, "A Forecast of Timing and Rates of Oil Production From the Beaufort Sea":8-9]

Industry and government spokesman indicate that accessible supplies and present technology could make Canada a major oil exporting nation by 1990. If the Beaufort reserves are as large as Dome says they are, Canada is the "proud owner" of oil fields that rival and possibly exceed those of Saudi Arabia.

Dome and Ottawa are not waiting for the "removal of social obstacles" in the Mackenzie Valley. Despite obvious dangers of enormous and irreplaceable nature to the Arctic eco-system, gigantic icebreakers are being tested which can plow through up to five meters of solid ice. These, industry literature indicate, can keep a tanker route open all year round and thus bypass the need for a pipeline.

Ironically, the construction of a pipeline may become the next serious demand of the northern Native groups desperate to preserve the environment. The complete picture of consequences that a major oil spill would bring in the Arctic Sea are beyond the knowledge of the scientific community. It is estimated however that damage would be irreversible as many species of mammal and fish now near extinction would be wiped out, and with them the last remnants of traditional Inuit life ways. Judging from recent efforts of the federal government to bring about a settlement for Dene land claims as well as extensive efforts to pass Bill C-48, the most likely long-range outcome is that Ottawa will seize control of all resources in the North, but will do this behind a smokescreen of "just" native land claim settlements. Because the technology is available to bring Beaufort Sea oil to market without building a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley, Ottawa will likely pursue that option until a permanent land claim settlement has been negotiated before undertaking the construction of a major energy corridor from the Beaufort Sea to southern markets. There is little doubt, however, that the energy corridor will eventually be built.

Giant uranium, lead and zinc deposits in the south Slave Lake area are also slated for extraction during the next decade. It is probable that Ottawa will want to have its cake and eat it to, both in the area of oil and gas and in other mineral resource extraction operations. If it is possible for Ottawa to appear to be the defender of the rights of the Dene or any other peoples while at the same time accruing large amounts of revenue resulting from mineral extraction resources in the North, it is very likely that the government would pursue this route. It therefore seems likely that the government may try to justify a temporary delay in major resource development projects in the Mackenzie area until sufficient Ottawa-owned or controlled technical infrastructure and the necessary legal controls are in place. This delay is not likely to exceed a period of two to three years.

The reader will recall that Mr. Justice Berger had called for a moratorium on all resource extraction operations in the Mackenzie Region area for a period of ten years in order to allow the Dene people time to develop the institutional foundations that would prepare them for the kinds of changes that would likely occur when industrial development hits the North. In the following chapter we will examine the progress the Dene nation has made in this regard. We will also make an assessment of what the Dene must do in order to capitalize on the ever-dwindling delay time that they are now enjoying.

Indeed, it is certain that no matter what happens, the Dene must bear the consequences of decisions made by others. Their capacity to influence the trans-national corporations is directly proportionate to their ability to convince the federal government that it is to the government's advantage to support the Dene claims at this time.

The Crack-up of a Nation State and the Emergence of Regional Power Centers

The nation-state as a unit of political organization has been under increasing stress since World War II. As we have noted in our discussion of trans-national corporations, many of the world's most important decisions are being made by actors whose power base straddles a number of national boundaries. The context of the world's most important decisions is a global one (not national) and the consequences become the very environment in which national governments must operate.

For example, it is simply amusing to follow election-time promises of political contenders in France, Canada, Israel, or the United States promising to put a "halt" to inflation or the devaluation of local currency. As Pierre Trudeau once remarked on national television, "The causes are global in nature and beyond the control of any national government, including my own."

But there is another kind of pressure which pulls and tugs at the integrity of the unitary state. Smaller sub-units are demanding a share of revenue and political power, as well as a high degree of autonomy from other sub-units of the nation state to which they theoretically belong. In the name of self-determination or regional autonomy, these sub-units are asserting their desire for control over their own territories, their own resources, and their own futures. The gist of the argument presented to the "mother country" is that "you (the federal government) do not represent our interests. In fact, you represent the interests of those who would take what we have for their own purposes. We prefer to relate to a global economy and polity as an independent sovereign unit."

There are variations on this secessionist theme in every major country in the world and most of the minor countries as well. Corsicans seek independence from French control, as do Algerians and the native people of French Guyana. Inside France itself Brittany, Alsace, Lorraine, and Languedoc are all crying for either secession or greater autonomy from Paris.

The British have their Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, the Belgiums have their Walloons, Flemish, and Bruxelloise, the Germans have their Sudetens and their Czechoslovakians, who don't like being a part of Germany. We could go on and on. In the U.S.A. there are separatist movements in the deep south, Texas, California and the northwest states. There are stirrings in Hawaii from the Polynesian people and in Alaska from the aboriginal nations.

Canada's federal government is spending big media dollars on a campaign to tug at the patriotic heartstrings of western Canadians or Quebeckers. Both regions are talking separation or "sovereignty association", which would spell doom for the federalism of Pierre Trudeau's liberals as well as the Ontario-Quebec industrial base whose economic interests federalism in Canada is now structured to nurture. Toffler's analysis of this phenomenon is straightforward and compelling.

"In many places we are also witnessing...the growth of subnational or regional economies that are as large, complex, and internally differentiated as national economies were a generation ago. These form the economic launching pad for separatists movements or drives for autonomy. ...these centrifugal forces...gain support because national governments are unable to respond flexibly to the rapid de-massification of society." [Toffler 1979:333]

Toffler argues that the centralized, standardized, specialized, synchronized mass society created by the Industrial Revolution is giving way (devolving) to a society made up of numerous, small, autonomous interlinked cooperating units. These units, he offers, will be determined by geographical managability, cultural identity and economic viability.

E.F. Schumaker takes much the same view of gargantian structures that do not serve the needs of the incorporated sub-units which are swept within the orb of their control. He proposes a principal of "subsidiary function" for deciding how to gracefully assist the natural devolution of organizations to a human scale on the planet, in his classic "Small is Beautiful":

"...the burden of proof lies always with those who want to deprive a lower level of its function, and thereby of its freedom and responsibility in that respect; they have to prove that the lower level is incapable of fulfilling this function satisfactorily and that the higher level can actually do much better." [Schumaker 1973:204]

The Dene demand sovereign control over their own society and the land of their forefathers. They argue that despite government assertions to the contrary, they are quite able to govern themselves effectively. They have done so for thousands of years (except for a brief colonial interlude) and want nothing more than the freedom to resume control over their own destiny.

Such a line of argument, in the threatened political climate within which Ottawa struggles to maintain its hold on the nation, is not likely to receive favourable hearing from federal politicians. On the other hand, the Dene are quick to point out that at a time when everybody else is looking for a way out of federation (referring to Quebec and Alberta) they, the Dene, are trying to find a way in.

As will be shown in Chapter 7 in a discussion on political development, the Dene are seeking a relationship with Canadian federation that would permit them a high degree of local autonomy but would also demand an active participation on the national stage in areas of common concern.

In short, at least in my view, the implication of what the Dene are proposing is government on appropriate scale in Canada. They are saying that Canada should be a federation of sovereign political units (the provinces). Their formula is not so very different from the one proposed by various provinces (especially British Columbia and Newfoundland) at the time of their negotiation for entry into Confederation.

At this writing, Canada is embroiled in a constitutional struggle. The Dene position is fairly consonant with the stance being taken by the provinces. It is dramatically opposed and extremely threatening, however, to a national government whose power has eroded so badly that it feels moved to attempt a land grab (Bill C-48) in the North to provide for itself some leverage in its struggle to resist the forces of decentralization.

The Global Value Crisis

The manner in which Dene culture was preserved for the centuries proceeding the colonization of the North was through a kind of inter-generational learning. This type of learning labelled "maintenance learning" by the Club of Rome and defined as follows:

> "Maintenance learning is the acquisition of fixed outlooks, methods, and rules for dealing with known and recurring situations." [Botkin et al 1979:10]

As we have already seen, nothing in the traditional repertoire of responses possessed by pre-colonial, pre-capitalistic, pre-techno-industrial society could have prepared the Dene for the challenges they now face. The values that bound traditional Dene society together were entirely appropriate to a hunting and gathering people. Those same values may well provide an adequate foundation for modern Dene cultural adaptation, but they will have to be re-interpreted in light of the world as it is today.

It is even probable that new values will have to be created to negotiate hitherto unaccounted-for decisional options.

"Values play a crucial role in decision making. The process of making decisions is based on the capacity to assess preferences, to trade off advantages and disadvantages, and to examine the future consequences of present decisions. ... Politics would be impossible without values, and so would objectives, programs, and strategies." [Ibid:39]

While the new values may in fact may be reincarnations of traditional ones, they will be specifically adapted to the current survival dilemma facing the Dene.

But if the problem of value changes for the Dene was only the one of remodelling old structures to suit new pressures and demands, the issue of values would not be nearly so critical a challenge as it actually is. For Dene traditional values are only one set of competing ideas about how the world should work.

We have already contrasted (Chapter 4) Euro-Canadian and Dene values as they clash in the school setting. What is so ironic about the enormous volume of value laden information that is invading the world of the Dene from Euro-Canadian culture is that western industrial societies are themselves engulfed in what we may term a world value crisis.

This global crisis of values is reflected in competition, the energy crisis, and in such debates as profit cut-throat vs. human well-being; growth (production/consumption) vs. stabilization; nuclear arms proliferation vs. disarmament; sentiment towards internationalism vs. a rising parochialism; science vs. religion; left vs. right--just to name a few of the obvious issues.

The types of influences that southern Canada has exported to the North may be traced chronologically: 1. merchant capitalism, 2. missionaries, 3. government, and 4. multi-national corporations. These institutions have all pushed variations on the same value theme. "Progress" and "success" are embodied in the ideal types emerging out of Euro-Canadian culture. Individual initiative, aggression, a reliance on scientific rationale--these are the hallmarks of the idealized role model presented to the Dene by the colonizer. That man should rule over nature, indeed should rearrange nature to suit his short term desires has been the message of white presence in the North for at least a generation.

While such values may promote the interests of corporate capitalism, they may be at the same time, very detrimental to the well being of life as we know it on this planet. Indeed a rising tide of protest to decisions made on the basis of "modern" values may be heard in practically every country in the world.

The Dene are being urged to proletarianize themselves (even though there are no jobs) as a major stepping stone to becoming "modern". They are urged through the media, the schools, and through the very structure of Dene - government relations to adopt the role models the colonizers project. This is even true to a large degree within the Dene Nation political organization itself.

From the perspective of ten thousand years of tradition, as well as the cultural upheaval of the past twenty-five years wrought by continual contact with white society the value messages projected by the intruders are looking increasingly unappealing. One respondent told me flatly that "Your society is crumbling down around your ears. Why should we try to be like you? Our chances of survival are better if we go our own way." [From the Author's Field Notes, July,1980]

Indeed the young man who addressed these words to me, has since returned to a land-based life style which he, along with many of the Dene people view as the only solid foundation for the future. They may be quite right.

But there are other groups within Dene society who have partially or entirely bought into imported southern Canadian values. The current social fact is that their is a constant tension in the communities because of multiple values which, even though they may conflict, reside within one family or even one individual.

Researchers in development studies are increasingly turning to the issue of values as being the key to the entire development process. [Botkin et al 1979, Goulet, 1977 Wilber et al, 1980] Of course it is not only developing societies that are in the throes of a severe values crisis. Mankind as a species seems, at this juncture, lamentably unable to make decisions that will bring about peace, prosperity, and an end to the oppression and critical want of security that plagues a perlexed humanity.

The Dene, despite the obstacles that beseige them from within and without, are bravely forging ahead in the process of their own development based on a value foundation derived both from tradition and conscious evolution.

In the final chapter we will examine Dene proposals and prospects for development based on their five point development model.[21]

We will also examine a range of strategies for local settlements in the areas of social, political, and economic development that are based on Dene traditonal values and make some recommendations as to how the Dene Nation movement might aid in local development efforts.

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[21] The five point development model is the author's analytical enumeration of the approach the Dene are taking to their own development.

VII. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN DENE SETTLEMENTS

A. Background

"Denendeh" is the name recently approved by the assembled leadership of the Dene nation (chiefs, councillors, and executive) to be the official designation of the Dene homeland.[22] But "Denendeh" and the course of Dene nationalism are both sheer rhetorical trivia unless they are rooted in the daily struggle for existence of ordinary Dene people. Apart from that struggle, these concepts have no power and no concrete reality.

"In speaking of the liberation struggle, Cabral reminded us that the people will not fight for vague ideas but only for substantial improvements in their lives, ..." [Freire 1978:151]

During the Berger Inquiry the Dene Cause was not a vague idea. More than one thousand Dene witnesses testified that the land and the Dene way of life were threatened by the proposed pipeline project. "No pipeline before a just land claims settlement" meant in the minds of a very substantial majority of Dene people that they--the Dene--would eventually be able to regain control of their lives and their land.

What that control would actually mean, when translated into local terms, for people in Fort Rae or Fort Providence or any other settlement was left to the imaginations of the people who lived in those places. It seemed there were always greater battles to be fought, larger issues to be clarified, and more remote bastions to be defended by the Dene Nation organization than those confronted daily by ordinary people in the local communities.

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[22] Agreed upon at a Dene nation leadership meeting held in December, 1980 in Yellowknife.

During the time that Judge Berger toured the North, (1976 -1977) such larger issues were able to captivate the imaginations of many people. Dene Nation efforts at community development in the settlements tended to focus (when it did occur) on political or cultural consciousness-raising. The vital linkage between the visionary ideals and common struggle to make substantial concrete improvements to the conditions in which the people lived was never made.

When federal funding was cut off to the Dene nation in 1977, a decision was made on the national level by the Yellowknife executive to focus the meagre remaining resources on developing a strong land claims position for negotiation with the federal government. This decision involved the conscious choice, on the part of the movement leadership, to sacrifice intensive community development programs in the settlements for broader "national" objectives. [From the Author's Field Notes, March, 1981]

It was precisely at this time (as we have seen in Chapter 5) that there was a proliferation of colonial institutions in the settlements. The net effect of the Dene executive decision was (in this researcher's view) that the people were left to choose between the abstract rhetoric of liberation and the concrete presence of the welfare system, the church, the police, the school, and the government.

As the days passed, the relevancy of the Dene Nation movement passed with them out of the consciousness of the settlement people. The pipeline had been stopped. Things continued almost as before. Only now there were more problems; problems such as violent crimes, inflation, low income and alcoholism. What did the Dene Nation have to do with these? Could the Dene Nation bring better health care, better housing, youth education programs, or jobs?

One Dene informant stated, "maybe there will a land claims settlement, but then what? Somebody still has to run things and make decisions on a day-to-day basis. If the Dene Nation is not here to teach us, we will have to learn from the government". [From the Author's Field Notes March, 1981]

No one is more acutely aware of the need for Dene Nation presence and intensive development activity at the community level then the Dene Nation staff members themselves. As soon as funding was returned in January of 1980, a vigorous community development program was begun with special attention to economic development and education. Even prior to the return of funding as early as the winter of 1978, efforts were underway to launch a community development training program. An experimental first year of this program was funded by L.E.A.P. (a federal job creation program) from October, 1979 to 1980.

The overwhelming fact of current life for the Dene movement, however, is that while it does represent the larger aspirations and ideals of the Dene people it has not yet successfully connected the long-range vision of Dene nationalism with the concrete reality of life in Dene settlements. Unless the average Dene perceives his own development (economic, political or otherwise) as being bound up with the struggle of the Dene nation movement, it is doubtful that the movement can serve any significant purpose beyond the land claims negotiation.

Yet it is precisely because Dene leadership is so acutely aware of this fact, and is now making intensive efforts to establish community develop programs across ""Denendeh"", that the potential of that movement to be an agency for aiding the development of the Dene people is very great.

This chapter will examine development in Dene settlements from three perspectives: political development; economic development; and sociocultural development. Special attention will be given to the process of community development in the context of Dene culture.

Authentic Development

The term "authentic development" has been used by Denis Goulet [1977] and in this thesis to distinguish a process generating genuine human progress from counterfeits that tend to serve certain interests at the expense of others.

By "authentic development" is meant that process through which a people expand their awareness of their individual and collective potential, and then participate in the actualization of that potential. There is no end-point to this process, but there are pre-requisites and exigencies. Among these may be listed the following essential items:

1. an increase in power over themselves, their environment, and their society;
2. liberation from obstacles of consciousness, of structure, and sheer want that would inhibit the realization of development objectives; and
3. an articulated vision of where change should take their society.

Like many poor countries in the third world, "Denendeh" will not, in this writer's view, be able to accomplish "authentic development" without the good-will and collaboration of agencies such as the churches, the United Nations and the Canadian government. Yet it would be difficult to overstress the point that it is the Dene themselves who must control Dene development, and it is the Dene themselves who must determine the nature and limits of involvement of any agencies, including government, in the development process.

At present the Dene nation does not have anything like the degree of control that will be needed. What it does have, that all other agencies in the North without exception do not have, is the enormous advantage of being an outgrowth of the Dene people's own historical struggle for self-determination. The fact that this movement has its roots in Dene culture imbues it with an animating force no non-Dene agency could hope to duplicate.

If the Dene nation is able to involve itself at the community level in the generation of economic options, in the building of a truly participatory and responsive local government, and in the re-creation of the education system (all of these efforts are either underway or very nearly ready to be launched) there is reason to believe that the Dene nation may well be the most appropriate agency, if not the only one, in the North capable of promoting the authentic development of the Dene people.

That "if" however, is a big one.

The Dene Approach to Development

From its earliest days the Dene Nation movement has presented itself as an expression of the Dene struggle for self-determination. Let us suppose that a land claims settlement is reached that permits the establishment of a sovereign entity called "Denendeh" within the context of Canada. Let us suppose, further, that the relationship between "Denendeh" and the rest of Canada approximates the relationship of the provinces to each other and to Ottawa.

What, then, would be the important elements of a Dene development package strictly under Dene control?

On the basis of statements made during the Berger Inquiry (1976-7) and the N.E.B. hearings (1980-81), as well as numerous Dene Nation documents such as the 1979 LEAP proposal for a community development training course, the political positon paper "Dene Government for Dene Self-Determination" (October, 1979); and on the further basis of the author's field interviews with some forty-five individuals intimately involved in the Dene struggle, the following five-point model can be suggested as a summary of the Dene approach to development:

1.

The use of the traditional value-base as a point of departure in the search for a standard by which to define the meaning of development. This is important because a people develop out of some condition, through other conditions, and into still others.

2.

The use of a community consensus process which enables everyone to participate in defining the meaning of development and the direction development will take the society.

3.

The insistence of a type of leadership that is guided by the people (and especially the elders) in its efforts to guide the people.

4.

The conscious undertaking of a cultural revolution to eject the colony within (i.e. the internalized oppressor).[23]

5.

The constitution of a new nation, i.e. a new political and cultural unit that is neither a replica of its traditional past nor a mirror of its colonial present, but a unique willful creation of the developing people themselves. This unit becomes the agency of development for the people who are its architects.

The first four elements of the model are the four cornerstones upon which the edifice of the new Dene nation must rest. These are not once-and-for-all stages in the achievement of nationhood, however.

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[23] During the Berger Inquiry the pipeline itself became dwarfed in the larger issues of cultural identity, self-determination and self-reliance. It became a symbol of oppression--an external target that represented the internalized enemy.

Freire has written

> "...the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor. Under these circumstances they cannot 'consider' him sufficiently clearly to objectivize him--to discover him 'outside' themselves...their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression."

Freire adds:

> "Freedom would require them to reject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift." [Freire 1970:30]

It is because the Dene are waging a struggle that they are in fact advancing on the path toward self-reliance. They have placed the responsibility for their own development where it belongs: squarely on their own shoulders.

The fifth element, that of the constitution of a political and cultural unit to act as the agency of development for the Dene people, marks a milestone in development strategy. Upon cursory examination by southern Canadian civil servants, what had appeared to be a renegade left-wing Indian minority group has undergone a metamorphosis out of which has emerged a new socio-political creation--the Dene Nation. There may be those in governments who, to extend the metaphor, have been left talking to the empty cocoon. The butterfly has indeed taken flight. The present politicized Dene participation on the Northwest Territorial Council, and even in key ministerial posts is one indication that any southern Canadian development schemes for the Northwest Territories will have to take Dene concerns into account.

"Creation of a collective personality is one of the most important tasks before a mass democracy. It represents a higher stage of human evolution, rising above narrow individualistic striving..." [Haque et al 1977a:2] "It requires maximum mobilization of domestic resources for poor societies, but above all it requires psychological and institutional staying power to meet crisis situations... This staying power is best attained collectively; individually a hungry man feels isolated and his mental reserves wane; collectively this reserve is reinforced for each and collective resolve gives individual strength to fight a calamity with heads high." [Haque et al 1977b:17]

It is my feeling that the creation of the new Dene Nation or "Denendeh" provides this collective personality so essential to a people in their struggle for self-reliance. What remains is the equally essential task of linking that collective personality to the lives and problems of the Dene people who reside, for the most part, in the twenty-six communities across "Denendeh".

We have identified three specific areas of activity where these linkages must be made. They are: political development, economic development, and socio-cultural development. Each of these three areas will be examined in turn. In each section an attempt will be made to analyze current conditions in the area of concern, and to review Dene nation plans and activities.

Where appropriate, suggestions will be offered as to how the Dene Nation might proceed in the prosecution of their development objectives. When these suggestions are given they are offered as one window on the situation. They are in no way intended to be prescriptive.[24]

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[24] My hope in undertaking development research related to the Dene was to be of some use to the Dene in their efforts to develop themselves. If my efforts to understand the problems facing the Dene can in anyway help Dene thinkers, then, in Freire's words, all concerned are "growing together in the common effort to understand the reality" [Freire 1978:8] that is being transformed. If useful to the Dene, my efforts are equally useful for all Canadians.

B. Local Development

There are twenty-six settlements in the Northwest Territories. Some are very small, with populations under seventy-five people. The largest have populations of over one-thousand people. Some are not exclusively Dene communities (Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik have substantial white populations). Yet all are places where Dene people are ghettoized in some "Indian village" section of town, and where they constitute the dominant group in the settlement, one of the most alienating elements of colonial presence in the north has been the style of local government foisted upon the people by the colonizers.[25]

But in order to show how it is that southern Canadian local government and other institutions and agencies actually inhibit development at the local level, it will be necessary to explain, briefly, the essential stages in a community development process.

The Community Development Process

Saul Alinsky has defined a good tactic of community organizing as using what you've got, to get what you want. [Alinsky 1972:125] He said that the organizer must convert "the major negative in the situation....into the leading positive." [Ibid:42] The Dene have often referred to the forced move into settlements as the final crippling blow to their way of life. Perhaps it was.

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[25] See Chapter 4 for an analysis of the effect of southern Canadian political forms on Dene settlements.

Yet it is difficult to imagine how a new Dene nation could have been created which was then able to successfully conduct the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline struggle had the Dene still been living in small migratory social units scattered across 450,000 square miles of wilderness. Once real local communities have been forged out of the raw materials of the existing settlements, it is my view that political, social and economic development as the Dene themselves have defined it will automatically follow. The major negative will have been converted into the leading positive.

We have said that the first development task is the creation of a community. We may define community as a group of people who possess a common sense of identity born out of commonly felt problems and needs and who formulate a common set of objectives based on commonly held assumptions and values. If such a community does not now exist, it is highly unlikely it will spontaneously come into being. Intervention from the outside is needed. The process interveners must catalyze beginings with "systematic discussions of common felt needs by members of the community. [Bhattacharyga 1968:5] Carl Taylor points out that

"Unsystematic discussions of various kinds and on various topics are continuously going among persons and families who literally live, as they do in rural villages all the time in each others presence. Such discussions are however, either mere gossip or concerned with complaints. It is only when discussions are systematic even though among a relatively few representative persons or families, that analysis of important commonly felt needs is accomplished." [cited by Mosher 1958:56]

These discussions can begin in informal conversations which will cumulatively contribute to an increase in critical awareness of tension built up among community members about specific issues.

For Dene communities there are two dangers to be guarded against at this stage. The first is to wait until everyone in the settlement is actively involved in the process before undertaking any action. It often happens that once a smaller committee nucleus has succeeded in launching an obviously viable project even the most skeptical join forces with the project for the triumphant finale.

The second danger is that the organizers, "...should not assume that just any local group in a community that wants to do something can be the nucleus of a community development group. Some groups are and do not intend to be anything other than selfish special interest groups. They may even be only a faction of a narrow clique in the community. There are numerous instances of agencies helping them and thereby dividing the community." [Ibid:59-60]

The already fragmented settlements do not need further divisive interventions. The consensus process lying at the foundation of the Dene political model is unworkable if people are emulating a Canadian parliamentary system which emphasizes the adversary mode of operation.

A Working Model

Hayden Roberts describes a six-part process of community learning and action [Roberts 1979] leading to higher levels of critical awareness and to an increase in a community's ability to cope with its problems and needs. I am citing Roberts' model because its integration of adult education and the process of community development parallels in many ways the Dene's own five-point model. Roberts' steps are 1. tension, 2. learning, 3. objective setting, 4. learning, 5. action, 6. evaluation--folding back into tension again as the cycle repeats.

Roberts' Step One: A tension is created. People begin to realize that important needs are not being met and, further, that this situation is common to many in the community. At this stage feelings are vague and undefined.

Roberts' Step Two: Learning takes place. It is at this stage that non-formal adult education programs are helpful. "Adult education may be said to be concerned with the process and the outcome of learning-*process* in the sense of how people learn, and how to bring about the experiences and the environment in which they learn; and *outcomes* in the sense of the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are acquired in the process. Ideally understood and practiced education is concerned...to start with states of tension and to examine them, look all around them, see them and test them in relation to others, and investigate alternative ways of bringing them to a resolution." [Roberts 1979:37]

This is combined with step one of a community-creation phase. During this phase there are three kinds of learning that must take place.

1. *Acquisition of knowledge about oneself, about the group or community and about the environment.* Part of what this entails in the Dene context is the creation of community memory about the history, heroes, traditions, stories, customs, beliefs, values and general world-view emerging out of the Dene past, yet appropriate to the present situation. It involves the acquisition of a view of man and of the good society which in turn necessitates the construction of a moral and social value base. It is not possible for an individual or a community to undertake a program of self-development without some idea of what the outcome of the process should be. Development as we speak of it here implies that a locally defined "improvement" is taking place. Contrast this with change which can have both positive and negative consequences. The individual or the community needs a model, an ideal of what this improvement should consist of. If I tell my son to be a good boy, my message to him presumes that he already has a model of what a good boy is and is not. Communities, too, need such a model, but the learning process leading to its discovery "is

certainly an activity in which the educator or animator has no right to impose his assumptions on the people with whom he is working." [Ibid:37] The community must be helped to discover its own mind.

In addition to this developmental type of knowledge acquisition, people need information about the real world. This might include (in the Dene context) political information, economic and lifeskills information, health care information, scientific information about environment, technical information--all of which gives a community a broader vision of what is possible.

2. *Skills in communication and group discussion need to be acquired.* The community development process and, indeed, the Dene's own consensus government process (upon which their five point development model hinges) depend on individual Dene in local communities being able to dialogue effectively in a group context, and being able to make decisions in concert with the rest of the local community. These decisions should reflect the sentiments and vision of the whole community and not just a faction of it. It therefore becomes essential that training for skill in communication and group discussion be included in any community education program aimed at sparking local development.

The community may also identify other skills that it wishes to acquire such as literacy skills, language skills; but this primary learning phase should be fairly process-oriented in that it contributes to a steady movement in the direction of the formulation of community development objectives.

3. *Learning about attitudes toward self, others and things* is the third learning category cited by Roberts. The fourth point of the Dene five point model addresses this type of learning. The model calls for a conscious undertaking of a cultural revolution to eject the colony within. We have discussed at some length the effects of the colonization process on Dene individuals and communities. The cultivation of attitudes conducive to self-reliant development is clearly an important part of adult education's input to the development process. In many ways, consciousness raising is the key to all other aspects of development. But experience has shown (China, Cuba, Tanzania, Chile, Guinea-Bissau) that this learning is often most effectively induced through practical, concrete community projects.

Roberts' Step Three: The formulation of specific community development objectives. As with any process model, it is essential that the steps Roberts outlines not be thought of as distinct or isolated component parts of a mechanical device designed to produce developed communities. Once begun, the tensions (Stage 1) and the learning (Stage 2) continue as long as there is life in the organism we are calling the community.

It would be specious to try to predict how long each phase is likely to be dominant before the next phase emerges. In some instances the community will be ready to formulate objectives early on in the game. Roberts points out that it is important not to skip the learning phase because when

> "there is a leap-frogging from the stage of tension to the stage of action without a process of learning and the formulation of clear objectives..." [Ibid:38]

which will emerge, at least in part, out of the learning process

> "what then happens is not community development but precipitate action which without the intervening and sometimes long process of investigation and learning commonly leads to unsatisfactory outcomes." [Ibid]

There are literally thousands of community self-help projects which lie half done, abandoned or ignored because the people who comprise the local community were not really convinced that they needed them. Examples are abandoned local clinics in Africa built on a wave of enthusiasm but without reference to the availability of medical staff; or, closer to home, co-operative saw-mill projects in native communities which are now either defunct or have become capitalistic enterprises which only benefit a few. The community in the latter case, did not know enough about co-operative managing and marketing. A host of other needed skills were also absent. Capital in the form of government grants ran out. The project then died.

> "Nothing by way of community development occurs if a project is nominated, the carrying out of which is totally beyond its local community self-help capacity." [Earl Taylor, cited by Mosher 1958:57]

During this phase, while the community is selecting its objectives, there will be a series of smaller meetings which systematically evaluate the felt needs and goals that have surfaced during the learning process in Stage Two.

In the Dene context this may be a series of community meetings, or it may be smaller groups such as adult education classes. The eventual outcome must entail the formulation of a set of objectives--whether short or long range--that is agreed upon by the community and its leadership through the consensus process.

Let us suppose, for example, that among other things, a community wanted (as most do) a local industry that will bring income into the community without disrupting valued lifestyle patterns.

That would clearly be a long-range goal. Intermediate goals might be to investigate project alternatives, to research markets and transport systems.

In the meantime, the community development process needs a visible victory or it will fizzle out.

> "A fundamental value to be created through all of this is self-reliance. The importance of doing it the hard way from the very beginning cannot be over-emphasized.

Shock projects should be chosen that have traditionally waited for state patronage and money, or looked impossible, and yet are within the means of a roused and mobilized community. State patronage has often destroyed traditional practices for collective work, such as the building or maintenance of public utilities, or the caring for community property (e.g. tanks) which would not be done any longer because the state was supposed to do it. Withdrawal of the benevolent state is therefore a pre-requisite for bringing back collective self-reliance. The masses should be asked to deliberate on what they can give, instead of merely receiving." [Haque et al 1977a:57]

It is my view that this short-range victory must be of the sort that brings a *tangible improvement* to the lives of the people in the settlement, either in the form of direct income or in some visible monument to collective enterprise. Its essential function in the process is to create a concrete symbol of what can be achieved when everyone works together.

The government has taken away from the Dene the responsibility for their own basic survival and maintenance. If they are to achieve self-reliance, the Dene must have that responsibilty back. It is possible that there will be a clamour of protest from those civil servants whose jobs become increasingly irrelevant as a result of this process. But a project that will not collapse into a pile of rubble and will not be socially irrelevant needs to be successfully completed to act as a symbol of the community's determination to achieve self-reliance.

To summarize, both long-range and immediate goals are needed. Catch phrases like "nothing succeeds like success" and "everybody loves a winner" convey conventional wisdom about how to maintain the drive needed to follow through with the long, hard struggle that is any development process.

Short-range goals need to be set and accomplished to build a community's confidence in its own capacities. Only after a few of these short-range victories are won will the long -range objectives seem truly realizable to a people who tend to respond passively to situations they have never been able to influence.

When community objectives finally are set, it means that what was before a disintegrated collection of individuals living in a settlement have

1. recognized their commonality;
2. accepted a set of common assumptions and values;
3. identified commonly felt problems and needs; and
4. taken initial steps to resolve the problems and meet the needs.

In other words they are now, for purposes of development, a community.[26]

A final aspect of the objective forming stage is deciding how the community will evaluate whether or not, or to what degree action taken contributed to the meeting of the objectives. In other words, built into any set of objectives there needs to be a means of evaluating the achievements of those objectives.

For example, a community centre is either built or it is not, but there were reasons why a community chooses the building of a community centre. It was felt that certain community needs would be met. Those needs should be enumerated at the outset so that a later evaluation becomes possible by asking if in fact the new community hall is meeting previously identified needs x, y and z.

Roberts' Step Four: Learning skills in organization, planning and administration. To this I would add the learning of whatever practical skills are needed to accomplish the objectives set out in Step Three.

The interactive relationship between adult education and the development process becomes clear at this point. The learning process has helped to identify needs and problems which have in turn sparked community resolve to deal with those needs and problems. Consequently more learning is needed to develop the human resource required to effectively accomplish the tasks which will result in the fulfillment of the community's objectives.

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[26] The settlements are now made up of anywhere from three to fifteen traditional family groups who have never learned to function as a integrated community. This social reality has never been addressed properly by the government or to date, by the Dene Nation. A treatment of political development issues to follow will include a discussion of current community structure.

The adult education programs foisted on native peoples have, for the most part, not been linked with the development process. Their effect, like that of formal education in general, has been to distract the community's attention from the central task of self-development for self-reliance.

"...adult education has to be directed at helping men to develop themselves. It has to contribute to an enlargement of man's ability in every way. In particular it has to help men to decide for themselves--in cooperation--what development is. It must help men to think clearly; it must enable them to examine the possible alternative courses of action; to make a choice between those alternatives in keeping with their own purposes; and it must equip them with the ability to translate their decisions into reality.

...this means that adult education will promote changes in men, and in society. And it means that adult education *should* promote change, at the same time as it assists men to control both the change which they induce and that which is forced upon them by the decisions of other men..." [Nyerere 1976:29]

Out of this learning phase, which is really a continuation of the learning process identified in Step Two of Roberts model, is generated the action which the community takes to meet its goals.

Roberts' Step Five: Action. This action stage in the Roberts' model refers to the deliberate activities initiated by the community as a result of Steps One to Four. The community learning and consultation process leading to this action was certainly just as much "action" and should not be seen as mere subordinate preliminaries. The process--all of it--is what sparks development in individuals and in communities. Result-oriented projects such as the Aswan Dam in Egypt may develop economies or enhance the status of politicians but they do not develop people. It is important that those advising community development efforts do their utmost to assure that projects that are carried out:

1. are the outcome of a learning process and reflect the desires and needs of the community; and
2. will contribute, after evaluation, to further tensions, further learning--in short to a continuation of the development process.

Roberts' Step Six: Evaluation. If displayed linearly, this would be the final step in Roberts model. Since Roberts displays his model as a circle with tension (Step One) at the top, and the process moving in a counter clockwise direction around the circle (left to right) evaluation is also near the top as it merges with tension to start the cycle all over again (see figure 2).

Roberts cites three solid reasons why evaluation in community development is important:

1.

Community development demands committment, energy, time and often money as well as other material resources of members of the community. These people have a right to know what they are getting in return for their investment.

2.

Community development usually involves the use of government or some outside agency's resources, be it money, technical assistance or other forms of aid. These agencies have a right to an accounting for the use of their resources.

3.

If there are no objective standards of achievement, it is doubtful that real learning will take place.

> "Unless we can judge whether an action has led forward or backward, and unless we have criteria for evaluating the relation between effort and achievement, there is nothing to prevent us from making the wrong conclusions." [Roberts Ibid:154]

This evaluation should, in the Dene context and if made through the consensus process, lead to new tensions and give birth to new awarenesses regarding community needs and problems, and should carry the community into another cycle of tension, learning, objective forming, learning, action,

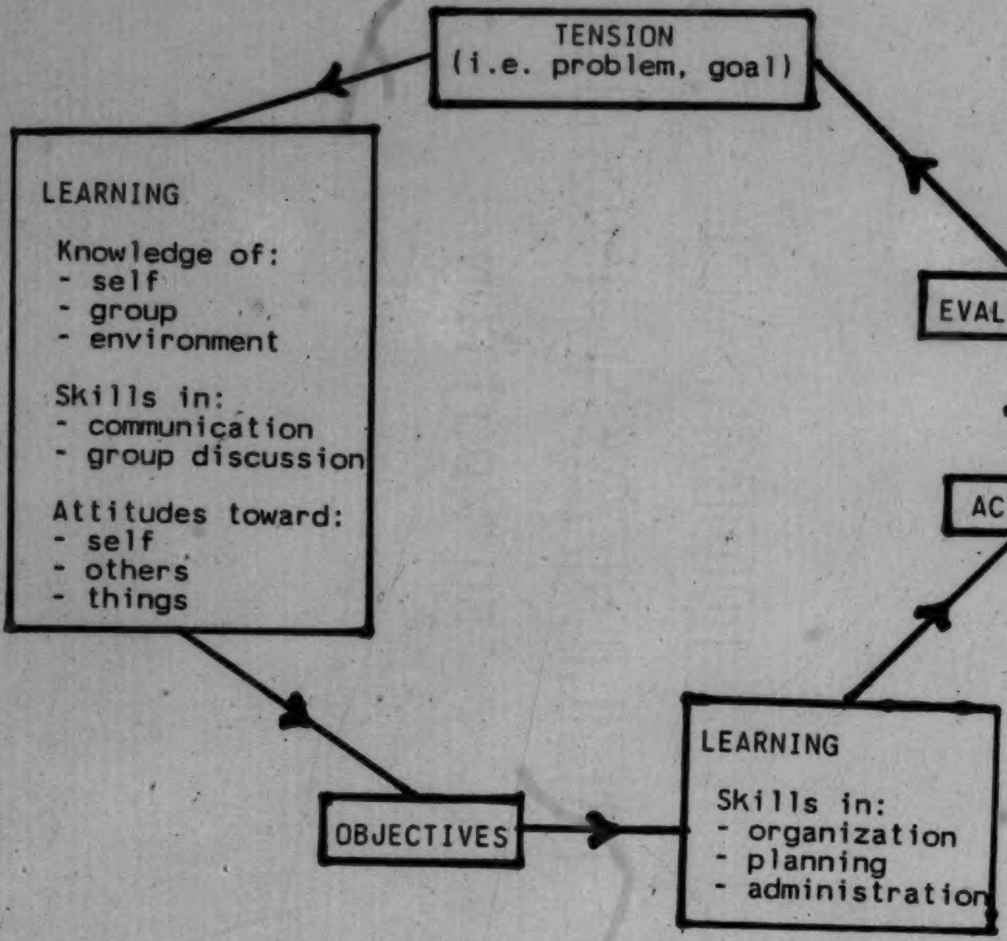
TENSION
(i.e. problem, goal)
LEARNING
Knowledge of:
- self
- group
- environment
Skills in:
- communication
- group discussion
Attitudes toward:
- self
- others
- things
OBJECTIVES
LEARNING
Skills in:
- organization
- planning
- administration
ACTION
EVALUATION

Figure 2

Roberts' Model of Community Development
From Roberts 1979:36

evaluation, tension, etc.

This essentially theoretical presentation of the community development process should aid the reader to assess what must and must not be done, if authentic development is to take place in Dene settlements. As we examine political, economic, or socio-cultural issues, it will help the reader if he bears in mind the basic elements that comprise the community development process. If, for example, no sense of group awareness and identity is achieved, or if no common objectives are identified, it is difficult to see how development could occur at a community level in the settlements.

C. Political Development in Dene Settlements

Prior to 1960, most Dene people lived in small family groups (20-30 individuals) and were engaged primarily in bush-harvesting activities. When the move to settlements occurred, the basic form of social organization moved with the people into their new homes.

In most if not all Dene settlements, the socio-political frame of reference was never effectively transferred from family-elders to community council and chief.

As in many transitional societies, there are often two quite distinct "governments" in Dene settlements. One of them is the formal system imported by southern Canadians and modeled after municipal organization in the South. The second is the invisible (to the foreign-eye) but no less influential traditional pattern.

Our discussion in Chapter 4 on local government touched on the various types of councils and committees foisted upon Dene communities. All settlements have a chief elected by the general population and a band council of three to eight counsellors, also elected. Some of the larger settlements have a parallel body called a settlement council, which is charged with the handling of municipal affairs such as roads, water and sewage. The band council is an Indian Affairs creation and is supposed to represent the "interests of the native people" as distinct from municipal matters.

As previously explained, the very notion of a permanent institution of government on the local level is foreign to Dene traditional culture, as are the concepts of elections, representative democracy, and permanent chiefs.

Dene settlements are riddled with intrigues, disunity and estrangements that are born out of a need for new and appropriate socio-political mechanisms for resolving conflicts and making decisions. This fact was testified to by respondents active in community affairs from eighteen different Dene Communities. (from the author's field notes, July 1980 and March 1981)

While it is clear that there are great differences between the general socio-political climates in the various communities, it is also only too clear that current local government models are divisive in their application and largely unable to provide a framework for the community creation so essential to a development process. This, I argue, is because without exception the models being used have not grown out of the unique social relations and cultural imperatives of the communities they purport to serve.

Another peculiar feature of local government in the settlements is the recent proliferation of the "advisory" boards. In each settlement there are a host of miniboards or councils whose function it is to advise and in some cases administrate various programs, concerns, and services in the settlements. The following is a list for the settlement of Fort McPherson. It will serve as an example of the range and types of organizations found in all Dene communities:

1.
Hunters and Trappers Association
2.
Housing Association
3.
Local Education Authority
4.
Economic Development Committee
5.
Health Committee
6.
Social Service Appeals Committee
7.

Community Club

8\.

Juvenile Club

9\.

Co-op Board of Directors

10\.

Tent and Canvas Advisory Board (a local community owned industry)

11\.

Peel River Alcohol Centre Board of Directors

12\.

Metis Local

13\.

Native Womens Association

14\.

Radio Society

15\.

Womens Institute [Ross 1981:8]

We may add, for other communities, a police review board, church groups, scouts and adult education classes (the latter sometimes becomes involved in community development programs). A recent Dene Nation report states "one begins to realize that the 'point of contact for people requiring information' is never a single group, committee, or structure." [Ibid:9]

Perhaps the heart of the issue is that there is no single agency under local control which is responsible for overseeing the development of a given local community. The settlement councils are basically municipal advisory bodies to the Territorial Government on matters of municipal services. Their responsibilities, as already noted, include water delivery, garbage and sewage disposal, snow removel, road maintenance and town planning regarding land use inside the settlement. These councils have no real power. All important decisions are made in Yellowknife by white civil servants. The various advisory committees and boards, each occupied with its own respective field of concern, primarily exist for the convenience and to serve the interests of the Territorial Government agency in Yellowknife that created and imported them to the settlement.

As in the case of the settlement council, no real power to alter the programs they are rooted in rests with these advisory councils. Recently the Territorial Government has made efforts to extend the powers of many local bodies to include limited fiscal control. One settlement manager stated that in his community these bodies were the productive sources of funding for a host of local programs. The linkage of each of the bodies was not to some local umbrella agency however, but rather to a corresponding Yellowknife department. "Yet", he went on "in most of the local communities there is no more than a dozen individuals who serve on all of the boards and committees." (from the author's field notes, March, 1981)

What is in fact accomplished by the presence of these various boards and bodies in the settlements may be summarized as follows: 1. a dissipation of the vital human resources that need to be consolidated and united if development is to occur. The most able individuals usually serve on one or more of these government bodies. 2. The local communities are given the false impression that power and authority over matters of consequence in the areas of health, education, welfare and municipal government lie in their hands. In fact, no such power has been vested in local bodies. What is accomplished is that community frustrations which could be creatively channelled to power local development efforts are dissipated through this institutional pressure-release valve. 3. The community is prevented from having a unfied prospective on the reality of the conditions in the settlement. Because perceptions are fragmented into departments of concern, local communities are blocked from developing a unified collective awareness of their predicament and from seeing common roots of local problems.

The first thing that needs to happen in the community development process is that the community must collectively realize that 1. we are a community, and 2. we have problems x, y and z. The political challenge implicit in this critique of local government structure is the need to develop a collective personality in each of the settlements. It may well be that a new politicial institution needs to be created.

"Institutions...perform the same function for a collective as a memory does for an individual; providing awareness and actuality of continuous existence, which is necessary for progress and evolution." [Haque et al; 1977a:57]

Berger [1977] had suggested that alternative political modes need to be developed among the Dene. We have described in some detail the Dene consensus model, but it is important to realize two things about that model. First, it is an ideal that at the best of times only approaches realization, especially on the local, but also the regional and national levels. Secondly, the oft-mentioned traditional roots of the model come from an entirely different socio-economic context than the one the Dene are living in today.

In December of 1980, a Dene Nation leadership meeting held in Yellowknife explored the problem of evolving a suitable local government model for "Denendeh". While local government was only a part of what the chiefs had to consider, it proved to be the most significant aspect of their deliberations. It became clear to everyone that the tension which had always existed between the broader view held by the Dene Nation executive and the localized view held by this or that community could not be brushed aside. There was no doubt that while the chiefs did see the need for a central government to co-ordinate the affairs of the nation, the balance of power in "Denendeh" would rest in the communities. [from the author's field notes March,1981]

The fact that some of the most capable of Dene leaders are now working at the community level as band managers, co-op managers, or in other local positions, and are in fact refusing to work at the executive level is, I feel, a reflection of the prevailing sentiments in Dene communities. The communities are ready for change.

No matter what the government or the Dene Nation does, or does not do, the people cannot wait any longer. What makes the time so critical is that increasingly people seem willing to accept economic options such as a job in a mine, despite the havoc that comes to families and communities as a result of these choices.

Current Dene Efforts for Political Development

The chiefs were asked to consider the division of rights, powers, and responsibilities between local communities and the "national" government of "Denendeh". The very fact that a full week of deliberations would be spent on these matters indicates the importance placed upon them by the Dene leadership. At this writing the Dene Nation is expecting the federal government to appoint a negotiator (the Dene have already selected theirs) and are anticipating the start of land claims negotiations.

A part of the Dene negotiating package will be the rough outline of what could become the constitution of "Denendeh". This document will delineate the various institutional forms and the dynamics of Dene government.

The chiefs based their discussions initially on a 1979 Dene Nation document "Recognition of the Dene Nation Through Dene Government" which described a political unit within Canada that would have many of the same relationships with the federal government as the provinces do. That document would give exclusive control to a Dene government over the following areas: education, administration of justice, health and welfare, local trade and commerce, natural resources (including non-renewable resources), human rights, family relations, transportation, local community development, agriculture, environment, culture, and taxation (shared powers with Ottawa).

In addition, the document would give the Dene Nation the power to trade directly with other aboriginal nations, to veto any projects (no matter who had initiated them) that would threaten the "very cultural existence of the Dene nation" and the power to make agreements and contracts directly with foreign governments (i.e. outside Canada) on matters under it jurisdiction.

The Dene Nation executive was basically asking the chiefs to describe how the powers listed above should be divided between central and local governments. That the chiefs should insist that the lion's share of power be retained at a local level comes as no surprise to anyone. What is interesting is that no one seems to be arguing against this stance. There are some Dene leaders and advisors who are more centralist in their views than others, but the general thrust of all Dene Nation thinking, planning, and significantly, spending, is in the direction of community developmment.

The Dene chiefs agreed on five general principles for local government.

1.

Responsiblity of local government should include education, health, local economic development, wildlife management, forestry, public works, recreation, culture and local services (water, roads sewage).

2.

Local government would control and supervise all agencies and committees in the community.

3.

No programs would be permitted in the communities (e.g. federal or "provincial") except under community approval and control.

4.

Only one umbrella agency would exist in each local community, that would take the form of a Dene council. All community development and other activities would be subject to its control and guidance.

5.

The choice of a specific local government model would belong to each local community. No standardized model will be proposed for all communities. [Gleaned from a Dene Nation internal document. From the author's field notes. March, 1981]

There was one intriguing model put forth during the leadership meeting by delegates from the Mackenzie-Liard Region that bears some comment. As it was presented, each family group in the community would choose one spokesman by consensus of the family members. Exactly how the boundaries of one family would be determined was not specified. Many communities have two or three major families to which a number of minor family groups attach themselves. In any case, each of the selected spokesmen would be a member of the community council. A community-wide election would select the chief from among the family spokesman.

Those who proposed this model also added that for some communities it might prove more practical to use the present election model to choose counsellors.

In my view, the family model constitutes a recognition of a basic weakness in current local government institutions. It also hints at a serious oversight on the part of the Dene Nation leadership in their past relationship with many communities.

Both the Canadian government and the Dene Nation have tended to relate to the elected leadership of the communities as *the government* . When the Dene nation holds what it calls "leadership" meetings, it invites the elected chiefs and counsellors to discuss and decide on important policy issues for the entire Dene nation. There are several flaws in this approach.

1. The Uninvolved Majority

As we have noted above, there are two parallel "governments" in most Dene communities. While their relative influence varies from settlement to settlement, it is certain that no elected government can be said to be "representative" of its constituency unless its plans and polices are ratified by the traditional family groups. In reality, it often occurs that the elected councillors are young, sometimes ambitious, and all too often unmindful of the need for continuous consultation with their entire community.[27]

The assumption that the chief's point of view is a reflection of the opinions and wishes of his people is only valid in direct proportion to the degree that full participatory democracy is practiced in the settlements. The fact is that there is nowhere in the N.W.T. where it can be said that participatory, consensus government is fully developed and functioning on the local level. There are several settlements that have made great strides in that direction, however.

The implication of this for the Dene nation is that the conscientization process which delegate participants in Dene regional and national assemblies experience is not carried over to the general population in the settlements. Hence, in every settlement there is a small handful of politicized, well-informed Dene who are aware of the need to work closely with the elders, and a large body of somewhat apathetic, apolitical people who rarely participate in the decison-making process of their community.

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[27] Respondents interviewed from eight major Dene settlements reflected bitterly on the divisions that exist in their respective communities between the "politicians" and the people. In certain cases, efforts are now underway to bridge the division and generate a new spirit of co-operation, but real change is slow to come. [from the author's field notes, March, 1981]

The conscientization of these people is an essential part of the political development of the Dene Nation, and it can only take place in the local context.[28]

For this reason, it is imperative that new approaches to local government be devised that call for the active, continuous participation of ordinary people in the decision making process. Increasingly, local communities will be called upon to decide on important development issues that will affect the lives of everyone. The learning and deciding that will have to go on if concensus government is to work on a local level is essential to the community development process and to the future strength of "Denendeh". Indeed, how can it be possible for a disjointed assortment of family groups to be welded into a single socio-political unit unless each of the constituent elements in a given settlement be drawn into the circle of meaningful participation in the community creation process?

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[28] Another group that must be dealt with in every community is that small, but often vocal group of individuals who, because of their educational background or experience in government positions, tend to identify more with southern Canadian values and interests than with those of the majority of Dene in their community. These individuals may even perceive efforts to mobilize Dene communities for development activities as essentially threatening. Their opposition will have to be at least neutralized, if they cannot be won over.

The Club of Rome states what happens when certain groups are not included in such a process:

"Much of today's participation would be characterized as 'participation by veto'. Groups large and small, appointed or self-chosen, are more skilled at blocking plans...than they are at formulating constructive alternatives... It is clear that the skills for effective participation must be improved and the right to participate will have to be accompanied by an obligation to accept the responsibilities it entails." [Botkin et al 1979:31]

For an entire generation, responsibility for the well-being of the Dene people has been expropriated by others. Development in Dene settlements implies the resumption of responsibility by ordinary people for the well being and progress of themselves, their families, and their communities.

The Dene Nation has, to a dangerous extent, in my opinion, fallen into the pattern of relating to the communities much as the colonial government relates to them. It is obviously easier and less costly to relate to an elected leadership as though it represented "the people". In some cases the chiefs may in fact be representative, but in numerous instances cited by respondents during field interviews, the chief's view represented a particular interest group and was not, in any case, based on a process of consensus consultation with the community.[29]

Some communities, especially the smaller ones, regularly hold community meetings to discuss important issues. All are welcome to express their views, and the consensus reached by such a "local assembly" guides the elected leadership in its task of governing the community. It is probably fair to say that the smaller the community, the higher is the degree of active participation in the decision-making process by the average person. Still, the majority of Dene communities are enough larger than the traditional family camp to require the development of new political institutions to permit the partiicipation of everyone in the community consensus process.

The family model mentioned above could be an important step in the right direction for some communities. The local traditional structure may have been too muddled by the historical process of the last fifty years to make it workable in other places. Still, the principle of smaller sub-units reaching consensus and then sending their 'spokesman' to a council might well be applied successfully with a wide range of local variations. A similar principle is being applied with great success in Yugoslavia. Small neighbourhood units or production units inform themselves, and then decide on all sorts of issues. If an issue concerns only that group, its decision is in effect, law. If the consensus reached involves a larger issue, a spokesman is sent to an area council, comprising of the representatives of many such local political units.

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[29] Particular communities and individual instances referred to will not be named in order to protect the respondents and the good name of the community leaders. The important point to note is that the pattern of "representative" government imported by the south has been, to some extent, uncritically adopted by the Dene in their own political practice.

The two achievements of this approach that have great promise for the Dene situation are: 1. government of appropriate scale which does not try to decide anything on a higher level that can be handled by a more localized political unit; and 2. participation by everyone in the political activity of the nation. [Dubey 1975, Jambrek 1975, Schrenk, 1979 and Sirk, 1979]

2. The Office of Chief

The second flaw in the past Dene Nation approach to the settlements concerns the office of chief. As we have explained previously, the concept of a permanent office called "chief" is a colonial importation. None the less, it is a concept that has been around long enough to have been accepted by most local people as the way of things.

Yet, the political reality of most settlements is such that the chief can in no way decide single-handedly how things will go on most issues. His real function has more to do with relating to the world outside the settlement then in managing affairs within. This is not to say that the chief is not important in community government. He is the figure-head of government. If anyone is to speak for the community, it will be the chief.

But the Dene Nation has made the same error as has the government in assuming that one man can speak for all without first consulting the other community leaders. For indeed, the chief is only one of several important community leaders. As stated, most settlements are really a loose federation of communities living in proximity.

For this reason it is important that political development take place on the local level to insure that

1. Whoever attends regional or national Dene nation leadership meetings does so as a spokesman of the various political subunits in the settlement, and with their full knowledge and approval; and that

2. The mechanism exists for fruitful discussions on important issues by all leaders in the community so that the delegate is fully apprised of the wishes of his community.

3. Communications from the 'Top Down'

Another flaw especially crippling to the Dene Nation's strength in settlements has been the breakdown of local lines of communication *after* regional and national meetings.

It has been assumed that chiefs and delegates will inform their communities of the proceedings of important meetings, or of any important issues that face the Dene. This simply does not occur in many cases.

Delegates return from assemblies and since no mechanism exists to insure proper feedback to the community, very little information is disseminated locally. Sometimes delegates find it difficult to relate political issues such as "Dene Rights" to the lives of an apolitical populace. Other times certain groups are kept in the dark because of petty rivalries. [from the author's field notes, March, 1981]

The same pattern is prevalent in general communications from the Dene Yellowknife office to the settlement. In the past, letters or reports were sent to the chiefs. These were always in English and there seemed little point in making the effort to explain issues to the average person that did not appear to have any bearing on day-to-day settlement life.

As a result, the "Dene Nation" is somewhat absent from the consciousness of most people in the settlements. Its remoteness from the ground-level issues that face most Dene people is, in my view, the most serious challenge facing the Dene nation organization today. Either it must become intimately involved on that level in a visible way, or its usefulness as a development vehicle for the Dene people will elapse.

In my view, the role of chief should be seen increasingly as that of public administrator--a role-function needed in an increasingly complex world. By strengthening the role and prestige of Dene councils as the authentic source of leadership in settlements, and by insuring that these councils stand on the foundation of full consensus participation by all groups in the community, a much stronger level of local political organization may be achieved. The reduction of the prestige and role of the chief--an individual--and the concurrent bolstering of the importance of the Dene council (a collective institution) will provide a government framework more in keeping with Dene traditional political values. It will also serve local development needs for community creation, and community consensus government in a far superior manner to present local government models.

The 'National' Government of 'Denendeh'

One of the things that makes the Dene nation concept such an attractive vehicle to be employed in the path of Dene development is its capacity to treat the entire group of Dene communities as one entity. This has important implications for economic development that will be discussed in the next section.[30] It also provides a protection for the communities against the divide-and-conquer strategy employed by the federal government and the trans-national corporations.

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[30] Another advantage, to be taken up in a subsequent section, is the cultural indentification that being included in the phrase, "We the Dene", brings to individuals. This type of identification is increasingly being viewed by development thinkers to be an absolutely essential feature of an authentic development process.

For example, a large multi-national oil company recently offered the Settlement Council of Fort Resolution a large sum of money, and even larger long-term contracts, to permit exploration operations to be based there. The short-term gain for the town would have been jobs, and considerable prestige for those in power. The long-range effects could have destroyed genuine community development efforts now underway. Among the harmful consequences might have been:

1. the creation of a boom-town atmosphere, with rises in prices, many transients, and a great increase in social pathologies;
2. a usurption of ongoing efforts to generate collective economic development. High individual incomes for a few would further worsen income disparities and further undermine the collective value priorities so much a part of Dene culture; and
3. the thin-edge-of-the-wedge would have opened the way for large-scale non-renewable resource development by outsiders despite Dene claims to ownership of those resources.

An alert council anticipated these and other negative consequences of the proposal, and rejected it out of hand. The Dene Nation provided considerable support, information, and encouragement during this episode, helping the community to realize the full import of their decision. In many similar cases the Dene Nation head office has acted to prevent some gross violations of Dene rights from occurring to a local settlement with a degree of speed, and comprehension of long-range implications well beyond the current capacity of that particular community.

Asserting that to deal with one Dene community is to deal with all gives local Dene a voice in Canada and the world that they could not otherwise secure. The future power and clarity of that voice will in large measure be determined by the degree of political development on a local level of Dene institutions capable of fostering genuine participation in the affairs of "Denendeh".

Even if that voice is not able to stop Ottawa from absconding with the most precious natural resources out from under "Denendeh" it may well force major social and political concessions to be made that will guarantee a much higher degree of political autonomy for the Dene than is now enjoyed by native people in the Canadian North. The consequences of northern development, Ottawa style, are likely to be little better for the Dene than a structured, ghettoized marginalization and a permanent dependency on the whims of southern Canada, as well as the trans-national corporations, unless the Dene Nation movement can forge the collective political will of the Dene people into a single socio-political entity. This must be done from the ground up, and it must be done now. Otherwise, as Judge Thomas

Berger warned, the impact of the now imminent massive industrial projects on the Mackenzie Valley Dene is likely to be tragic and irreversible.

Why Local Political Development is Essential Now

Community development in Dene settlements will never occur until the populations learn, through participation in a community creation process, how to work together for goals that transcend individual and family concerns. This learning cannot take place unless there is a structure within which individuals can contribute their creative energies in return for a new collective identity. This identity will have to be a large enough category to take in all sub-groups in the settlement, and flexible enough to permit the unique contributions of the various elements present within it. The present chief and band council system is not providing the avenues to participaton needed to generate collective or community learning.

Community learning for development will begin as soon as a means is presented to individuals in the community to participate fully in the re-creation of the community. This process will involve the re-examination of fundamental societal values and goals and will lead to development in social and cultural arenas that would have been unachievable for the elected community leaders acting on their own initiative. This is because values, and the important definitions that comprise a people's world-view, are not the property of a specialized few. They belong to society at large and must be redesigned, recombined, and reordered by the people who are together engaged in a development process.

I therefore recommend as a practical first step in the community development process that each Dene settlement undertake an immediate re-creation of their local government system to conform with the following minimum requirements:

1.

Family groups must all be fairly represented.

2.

Power must reside in the collective, not in individuals, or special offices of power.

3.

The Dene traditional consensus process should be employed.

4.

People should be encouraged to use their own first language.

5.

Participation by all members of the community must be secured, especially for important decisions.

6.

The administrivia of government should not be confused with the authentic self-determination process.

7.

No individual should achieve special status from Dene Government.

8.

Government must be linked to survival as it was in traditional culture. Hence the economic progress of the community must be a principal government concern. This "progress" should benefit everyone, not only a few, and must be under direct local control. This will concretize the value of participatory government in the minds of the people.

Employees of the N.W.T. department of local government interviewed for this study indicated that whatever model a community produced would likely receive the full support of the N.W.T. government as long as all groups in the community were fairly represented. (from the author's field notes, March, 1981) This would mean immediate funding assistance for training of various kinds should a community feel the need for it. It is my feeling that Territorial Government opposition to a local community plan can only help the community in the long run if the community refuses to bow to bureaucratic pressure from 'above'. At present, there are communites that have both a settlement council and a band council plus an army of committees. While there may be some individuals in such communities that benefit from the present system, and are therefore likely to resist change, it seems elementary that communities that do succeed in initiating a genuine political development process will serve as attractive examples for the others. Accompanying such efforts should be a "Denendeh"-wide publicity program explaining the nature and reasons for the new experiments.

A series of community meetings, perhaps preceded by house-to-house visits explaining the nature of the proposed changes, could lead, as it has in at least two Dene settlements, to a simple bypassing of obsolete systems of government and the establishment of a Dene council. The *defacto* seizure of control may not be necessary in all cases, but if Yellowknife bureaucrats cannot accomodate a community's wishes, it may prove expedient to install the new mechanisms and let the Territorial Government make adjustments after the fact.

The time for petitioning the Territorial Government for self-determination in local settlements has passed. The process of assuming that control would in itself be an educational experience that would no doubt enhance the quality of participation in local affairs of ordinary people in the settlements and contribute greatly to the community creation process.

D. Economic Development

Background

Walter Rodney stated that "a society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity...to win a living from the environment." [Rodney 1972:10] If we extend this concept to include the political and social dimensionss of environment, Rodney's definition will serve to describe what, in this thesis, is meant by economic development.

In Chapters One and Two we described the Dene traditional economy and how, as a result of the fur trade, a dual economic structure developed. We said that while the traditional economy was based on the hunting and gathering of bush resources and operated on the basis of reciprocity and sharing, the production-for-profit feature of fur trading effectively introduced a new value and a new problem to Dene life. The new value was individual gain. The new problem was economic dependency.

We went on to describe how, as government gained more and more control over the lives of the Dene, this dependency became so pervasive as to eclipse the traditional sector of the Dene economy. This eclipse took place when the bottom fell out of the fur market after World War II. At the same time, an unprecedented rise in the cost of all commodity trade goods including foodstuffs took place.

In addition, the Dene told the Berger Inquiry: "It must also be noted that the heavy concentration on the colonial development of non-renewable resources has made it extremely difficult for us to maintain our traditional land-based activities. The renewable resource sector has been undermined by the unbridled exploitation of non-renewable resources. This subversion has resulted from environment impact (e.g. arsenic pollution of YellowKnife Bay, and flooding of lands around Pine Point Mine), the drainage of economic surplus from the region, the influx of transients and settlers, and the coercion which forced us into permanent settlements..." [cited in McCullum 1977:28]

Speaking to solutions, and in particular to the land claims issue, the Dene testimony continued:

"...the experience with non-renewable resource development has convinced us that we must have control over decisions concerning further development on our land, not only to set the conditions which will control the impact of such activities but also to reap the benefits which the right of ownership entails. Millions of dollars in economic rents or super profits have left the Northwest Territories to be invested elsewhere by the companies concerned. These rents should have remained to support our development objectives." [Ibid:29]

Clearly, as Thomas Berger has pointed out, there are two philosophies of northern development, based on two very different sets of assumptions. [Berger, 1977 Vol.2:4]

The Modernization Paradigm - The First Philosophy of Northern Development

When the Canadian government in concert with the trans-national resource development consortium speaks about northern development for native people, their assumptions harmonize with the economic doctrines propounded by W.W. Rowstow and exported by metropolitan industrial powers to nearly every third world country on the planet.

As we have discussed at some length in chapter three, this is the neo-classical or modernization theory which argues that development of urban and/or industrial centres will improve the standard of living and hence the quality of life of the poor by a 'trickling down' of the wealth. Rigorous application of this theory in the third world has demonstrated that it creates more problems for developing peoples than it solves; widening, rather than narrowing, the gap between rich and poor.

Those who work in the international development field (such as the Ottawa staff of CIDA or the Washington staff of U.S. AID or the New York based World Bank) have recognized, at least in their recent re-statements of objectives, the futility of such an approach to development. In fact, except in certain musty bastions of development "expertise", it is difficult to find serious students of international development problems who do not openly criticize such an obviously colonial, exploitative, and anti-developmental approach to third world problems.

That the current Canadian government has reaffirmed its allegiance to large-scale industrial development as the solution to northern development problems, including those faced by the Dene, indicates at least one if not all of three things: 1. the government is not familiar with current thinking and literature on development problems; 2. the government does not consider the native people of the North to be an underdeveloped and colonized peoples, and therefore does not place them in the same category as the Asian, African or South American poor; 3. the government's interests lie with, or in the same directions as, those of industry and so, 1. and 2. notwithstanding, it has opted for whatever stategy will yiel the most profits in the short run for large-scale industry. As a consequence, the development dilemma of the Dene is to be subsumed by the corporate profit priority.

The Second Philosphy

The Dene have articulated the salient features of the second philosophy to which Thomas Berger referred: "Clearly, we must develop our own economy, rather than depending on externally initiated development. Such an economy would not only encourage continued renewable resource activities, such as hunting, fishing and trapping, but would include community scale activities designed to meet our needs in a more self-reliant fashion. True Dene development will entail political control, an adequate resource base, and continuity with our past. It will be based on our own experience and values. In accordance with our emphasis on sharing, Dene development will not permit a few to gain at the expense of the whole community." [McCullum 1977:29]

Berger had recommended a ten-year delay in large-scale industrial development in the North during which "alternate modes of social, economic and political development can be explored." [Berger, 1977 Vol.2: XII] He uges a strengthening of the local economy and the renewable resource sector, "including logging, sawmilling, fishing, trapping, recreation and conservation" [Ibid 4] before large scale non-renewable-resource-based industrial activity is allowed to commence.

The reason for this recommendation is that during this time native communities might be able to develop alternatives to wage labour in large-scale industry that will be more in keeping with overall development objectives set by native people themselves. This alternative economic development would mean that the Dene, especially young Dene, would have a choice between selling their labor to industry or earning a good living in their own communities. But what the Dene Nation has said, and what they have actually been able to do in the communities, are as different as the rain and a wish that it would rain.

"The Dene Nation" and Dene Economic Development

It is ridiculous to try to conceive of Dene development apart from an improvement in the material conditions of life for the Dene people. These improvements are what the white man has been promising but not delivering since the days of Treaties. To most people in the settlements, phrases like "Dene rights" or "a just land claim settlement" or "self-determination" or "Dene Government" means better housing, better education, a steady source of income that would eliminate the need for welfare, and the right to say what will and will not happen in one's own back yard.

Increasingly, people are growing tired of the Dene Nation rhetoric. The prevailing sentiment in the settlements is that of impatience with slogans and promises and a desire for substantial improvements in the material quality of life. If the Dene Nation is unable to bring those improvements (and many settlement people see no evidence of this capacity) then people will seek other sources of help in trying to improve their situations, even if it means going to government or trans-national corporations, and even if the long range result is cultural genocide. [from the author's field notes, March, 1981].

If authentic development is to occur in Dene settlements, it must be a process that is linked to the economic progress of the people. In my view, this linkage must be made within the next two years. Otherwise, in all probability, it will be too late. The last remnants of Dene values will have suffocated beneath the blanket of boom-and-bust "prosperity" that will make a few people well off for a short while, and many people social misfits for generations to come.

If the Dene Nation is to serve as a vehicle for the development of the Dene people, it will have to hurry in its efforts to promote economic development based on Dene cultural values, and there must soon be tangible results for these efforts. What kind of efforts are needed? Judge Thomas Berger said:

"We must focus on the question of fundamental social, economic and political relationships... There is a fundamental need to establish new institutions in the North." [Berger 1977 Vol.2:5]

What is needed in the economic realm is an integrated, locally-based economy that features a dependence on renewable (rather than non-renewable) resources. Such an economy "implies an interdependence among enterprises" and supporting agencies that has never before existed in the North. [Ibid 41]

Viable economic enterprises providing culturally acceptable survival options to Dene people would greatly cushion the impact of large-scale industrial development projects. The Dene would then be involved in their own development process, and not so desperately in need of any source of income that presented itself (such as a mine or pipeline work). If such a viable option could be generated in the future and could be linked with educational reform, as well as political and cultural transformation in Dene settlement, it is my contention that the Dene would have a reasonable chance of escaping the social malaise and cultural obliteration that awaits them behind the modernization mirage.

The Importance of Land Claims

Berger wrote:

"The settlement of (native) claims, and the institutions established as a result of that settlement, will enable native people to defend their own common interests." [Berger 1977 Vol.2:217]

The present structure in the North is such that the Dene are not allowed to define what development will mean for their own communities. The prevailing definition is a concoction of white government employees and is enforced by the terms of capital grants needed to initiate any economic project.

It is difficult to imagine how the alternative economic options spoken of by Berger, supported by the necessary political, cultural, and institutional innovations, can ever occur in the North as long as the real control of "Denendeh" is in the hands of foreigners following policies established thousands of miles away and designed to preserve the values and promote the interests of non-Dene corporations and governments.

The central issue in land claims is not land. It is sovereignty. It is control. The Dene claim is that they once controlled their own life patterns, but that control was taken away from them. They now demand that what is rightfully theirs be returned to them. Naturally, they want their land and its resources, but even more important to them is the right to control the forces of change in their collective lives, so that *they* can determine what it will mean to be a Dene in the future.

The government of Canada has not deviated significantly in its policy on Native Claims since Pierre Trudeau made the government's position clear, while speaking in Vancouver on August 8, 1969.

"Our answer is no. We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical 'might have beens'." [cited by Berger 1977 Vol. 2:216]

Since this statement was made, we have witnessed some apparent reversals of this policy such as the James Bay settlement, the COPE agreement in principle, and the enshrinement of aboriginal rights (which no one has yet defined) in the proposed new Canadian Bill of Rights. A careful examination of the terms and conditions of these "reversals" reveals quite another picture.

It would not serve our present purpose, which is to examine the question of economic development in Dene settlements, to proceed with the detailed comparison of the Dene claim, the James Bay settlement, and the COPE agreement in principle. For our purposes, it will suffice to say that the government has been pushing all along for a James Bay-type agreement with the Dene. This would mean that the Dene would have ownership and control of some land and partial control of other land but no control of their resource base, or even the right to control resource development projects on their land. A token financial settlement would also be a part of the deal. The amount, if comparable to the James Bay Agreement (225 mmillion dollars) is hardly sufficient capital with which to finance the development of twenty-six settlements.

The Dene are saying that they can only develop themselves as a people if they can control the land, the resources and the institutions of "Denendeh" as a provincial jurisdiction, as southern Canada does.

The Dene economic platform is to incorporate all Dene settlements into a large co-operative, and to negotiate with the outside world on that basis. All economic activities would be co-ordinated on at least a regional basis to insure a full complement of service and resource exploitation for an area. This kind of co-ordination which, they say, will insure the sharing of surplus value of production among all communities could not be accomplished unless a fair amount of internal control and protection from external influence could be achieved.

It is doubtful, therefore, that genuine economic transformation will take place until a land claims settlement has been reached. What is critical is that some reforms, and some visible economic progress be made now. A co-operative economy of the scale the Dene are proposing will not magically appear as the ink drys on a claims settlement. The infrastructure needs to be built now.

Some Possiblties for Dene Settlements

The linking of wide-spread community participation with a successful economic project that brings a substantial improvement to the lives of the people in a settlement ought to be the prime focus of Dene Nation communtiy development efforts. Through such a project a host of necessary development prerequisites could be met, not the least of these being that average people in the settlements would begin to identify with the Dene Nation movement as a viable agency for promoting a better way of life for the Dene people.

Michael Asch has made a good case for the potential ability of renewable-resource-based economic development. He, together with Berger, has argued that there are a number of strategies which in combination could result in the development of a self-reliant and even self-sufficient economy.[31] [Asch 1974:1978] These strategies may be summarized as follows:

1.

Increase the production of bush resources. Studies done for the Berger Inquiry suggest that fur production could be doubled and fish production almost tripled without exceeding the annual renewal capacity of these resources. [Berger 1977 Vol. 2:Chapt. 2]

2.

Establish processing facilities for all of those resources in Dene Communities. Presently those resources not utilized by the Dene themselves are sold in their raw form and transported south for processing. This strategy would mean the establishment of fish processing and packaging plants, fur and leather tanneries, garment manufacturing facilities (including fur coats, leatherware, footware and handicrafts.

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[31] Self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency. Self-reliance means the capacity to act independently to capitalize on the resources currently at ones disposal. Self-sufficiency implies the ability to survive and flourish on one's own resources without outside help.

3.

Pursue agricultural development in the form of fish farming, fur farming and the husbanding of bison and muskoxen for milk, meat, wool and fur.

Although the Canadian Wildlife Service has published two reports [Scotter,1970, Scotter and Telfer,1975] which explore some of these possiblities, considerable research is still needed in this area. More work needs to be done on the potential inter-dependence of such projects and on environmental pre-requisites for each possibility. For example, a combination of commercial fishing, fish farming, fish planting in natural lakes, and fish packaging could be combined with a furfarm industry to provide food for fur stock. There is also some potential for vegetable and feed crop agriculture, as well as cereal production. China's plastic greenhouses might be adopted.

In addition, there is a limited potential for a wood-products industry which could include the manufacturing of building materials, furniture and other wood products for local (N.W.T.) consumption. At present there are several wood-products industries being operated by Dene people.

In Fort Resolution, the Peel River Co-operative lumber operation has, after years of false starts and shut-downs, finally established a stable growth pattern that it benefitting the entire community. At first a typical capitalist "oversight" was unanticipated by the Dene. Pine Point Mines, owned by the mammoth Cominco Corporation, decided to purchase its lumber from British Columbia and the United States instead of from the Dene operation forty miles away. This was despite repeated efforts on the part of the Peel River management to secure a contract. The Fort Resolution mill has the capacity to produce good quality lumber and to deliver it at a rate which exceeds Cominco's productions needs. The Dene now have contracts for all the wood they can produce from a buyer in Saudi Arabia.

Another wood products venture, operated by the Dene and Metis Association jointly, is a log house construction company. The group is also quite successful, despite their relative inexperience in the business. They have secured sizable contracts for home construction in Fort Smith, Fort Resolution., and Fort Simpson for all three years of their operation. Their prospects are looking even more promising for the 1981 season.

Both of these enterprises permit Dene to work in an environment and under terms that are not disruptive to family or community life. In fact, these projects contribute substantially to the quality of life in the settlements.. Income is provide to some families and numerous spin-off benefits accrue to the community at large from the multiplier effect of money released into the local economy and from the visible embodiment of Dene co-operative values in a modern economic venture. [from the author's field notes, March, 1981]

4.

Tourism

Many communities are building hostels or small hotels to capitalize on the government employees and other visitors who come regularly to even the smallest settlements.

The Northwest Territories has great potential for tourism. It is diverse in its beauty, vast and unexplored, rich in game, fish and fowl, as well as in Arctic fauna and flora. This is not to mention the cultural attraction provided by the Dene themselves. This last "frontier" could become a prime tourist attraction, especially during the perpetual daylight months.

Clearly the making or breaking of such a venture would be in the promotional word, and in the excellence in services provided. Comfortable lodges, good food, and efficient communications and transportation systems would all be essential.

While there are enthusiastic promotors of this sort of project for some Dene settlements, there are many potential drawbacks that could leave a community with a big empty facility, and a lot of bills to pay as well as with a very deflated community spirit.

5.

Small-scale Manufacturing

There are several examples of developing societies that boosted their economic potential dramatically by entering the manufacturing market in a way that suited their cultural work patterns and their chosen lifestyle. South Korea is often cited as one of these, but I think it is a poor example because the entire boom that country experienced was predicated on domination patterns inside Korea and an acute dependency relationship with the United States.

There are a number of interesting small-scale success stories that come out of the Kibbutz movement in Israel. These communal economies were primarily based on agricultural production, but in many cases, residents found it possible to diversify production activity to include transistor manufacturing or some other small, clean operation that could generate income without drastically disrupting the communal lifestyle.

In Fort Providence, N.W.T. the community is starting (for the second time) a fiber glass products plant that can produce water tanks (many houses have them because water in delivered by truck in most smaller settlements) and boats. It is hoped that this operation will find a primary market in the Territories. The concept of producing products that Dene people use and would otherwise have to buy from the Hudson Bay Company or some other outside source is consonant with Dene nation economic development plans. Another example of such an industry is the tent and canvas manufacturing operation in Fort MacPherson.

Government as an Industry and the Need for Infrastructure Development

Beyond the renewable-natural-resource-based industrial development, there is another kind of economic potential for Dene if they were, in fact, to gain control over the administration of their own territory. At present an incalculable sum of money is spent each year to pay the salaries, maintain the programs of, and house, an enormous number of civil servants, teachers, medical personnel, social workers, police staff, and the like--almost all of whom are imports from southern Canada. Even the clerical workers are, for the most part, non-Dene. Were this army to be withdrawn, the white population of the Northwest Territories would shrink to a fraction of its present dimensions. Surely, a large portion of their work could be done by Dene with proper training. Michael Asch has called the development of infrastructure "the primary task" of Dene economic development. He was referring primarily to plants and installations. "The question...reduces to one of capital", he states. [Asch 1977: 17] While capital expenditures will be necessary for certain installations, I believe that human resource development will be the primary task and will constitute the most vital challenge facing the Dene in local economic development.

Many new skills will be needed. Old technolgies will have to be improved. Most importantly, each community will have to decide exactly what it's economic goals and philosophy will be, and, accordingly, which type of industry or combination of strategies is the most suitable for the given locality. These questions demand serious research and much community learning. Research and development dollars spent in the North have to date been an investment made by the colonial regime with every intention of harvesting a bountiful return--for southern Canada. Now the Dene must directly benefit from research aimed at opening development doors for Dene communities.[32]

All of this presupposes a socio-political context which will permit the community to consult on these vital issues without having its attention divided by numerous government agencies clambouring to justify their own existence. It also presupposes that once a local community has decided on an economic development strategy it would not have to contend with outside intervention specifically designed to undermine the community's efforts.

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[32] Here is one area where government resources could be an immense help to the Dene. Federal departments are well stocked with expert manpower that the Dene nation simply does not have at this time. Research in areas such as agriculture, marketing, investing, monetary management, savings and investment, transportatoin, health and education and a host of other disciplines will be needed. The problem with federal research agencies assistance is that full control of the goals, methods and output of researchers is owned by the government, and not by the Dene. A strategy for development research that would give this control is being developed in Canada at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Department of Adult Education under the guidance of Bud Hall. The strategy is called Participatory Research. A basic description of its features will be discussed in a subsequent section.

The Dene have said that economic rents and royalties from oil, gas and mineral extraction industries would provide the necessary capital to develop the kind of infrastructure Michael Asch speaks about. This argument begs the question of land claims settlement and places Dene local economic development in a kind of limbo, waiting hopefully for the day when a favourable claims settlement starts pumping millions of dollars into Dene hands.

It is only realistic to consider the possiblity that the current government of Canada may conduct its affairs in the North the way every other government of Canada has done since the turn of the century. It may, in other words, take the commodity (oil) and the profits (the economic rents) for itself, and completely disregard the protests of native people.

I am recommending, therefore, that the Dene seek other sources of funding and proceed with local community economic development now. My preliminary probes into possible funding sources reveal that there is money available, but that it can be difficult to get the money without strings attached.

It was my impression in talking to government sources, that a strong community-based program with clear goals and with reasonable chances of becoming an income-producing activity in the long run would have no trouble getting initial funding. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the Job Creation Branch of the Department of Manpower are two such sources. The National Federation of

Co-operatives is another. [from the author's field notes, March 1981]

Getting started is not the only issue for Dene economic projects, however. The training of middle-level management and technical personnel and the economic staying power that will enable a project to ride over the first five to ten years of operations must also be assured. It has, to date, proven exceedingly difficult to find this sustained kind of help. I therefore conclude, with Berger, that the structuring of economic aid to the North must be radically altered. It seems unlikely that more then token economic progress can be made until a land claims settlement permits the Dene to create their own political and economic institutions. None the less, it is crucial that the groundwork for that stage be laid now.

Central Planning

At this writing, the Dene Nation is in fact gearing up for intensive community development activities in the settlements. One central focus of all these activities is to be economic development.[33] The reader will recall that shortly after the Dene victory in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry all but the barest core of funding to the Dene was cut off. The Dene Nation decided at that time to concentrate its limited resources on the task of preparing a land claims position. While that work proceeded, the communities were left to fend for themselves.

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[33] Political and socio-cultural development go hand in hand with economic development to comprise the total Dene development package. The strategy of using an economic project as a focus for cultural consolidatoin and political transformation is one that has been used with great success in numerous developing societies including Tanzania, Cuba, and Guinea-Bissau.

One year passed, then two and three, and still the negotiations had not even started. The Dene Nation had been riding on the crest of victory after Berger. Now Dene leaders found themselves stalled by the federal government and increasingly relegated to a state of virtual irrelevancy vis-a-vis the masses of Dene in the settlements. As soon as funding was returned (January, 1980), work began again towards local community development.

Within the Dene Nation organization, there are now departments working feverishly to ready programs for the communities that will stimulate economic progress, educational reform, political change, and overall community development.

The economic development staff produced a program which was submitted to community leaders at the December, 1980 and April, 1981 leadership meetings. A statement made in that proposal reflects clearly the continued centralist-localist tension that will no doubt pervade Dene politics for years to come.

"On the one hand, totally centralized planning overloads important local factors and tends to alienate the majority of people while on the other hand, totally localized planning tends to ignore major regional, national and international considerations." [Dene nation

1980 internal document, "Economic Development Program"]

The economic development package was not approved by Dene leadership until it was assured that control of local development was to remain exclusively in the local hands. The central organization is to play an advisory and co-ordinating role. It is also to stimulate new development opportunities for the entire Dene nation. [from the author's field notes, April, 1981]

The plan for which government funding is now being sought calls for the following features:

1.

A local planner to be hired for each community. He/she would work directly for the local Dene council and especially with a local economic development committee.

2.

The Dene Nation would hire a team of central planners to advise, support and assist local planners, and to further refine the Dene national economic development plan.

3.

Each of the five regions of "Denendeh" are to have a Regional office to co-ordinate regional development efforts, and to act as a readily accessible resource for the communities in its zone.

The central planning agency would attempt to stimulate opportunities for economic growth in the following sectors, a. renewable resources (hunting, trapping, fishing, forests); b. non-renewable resources (this will be inapplicable if the federal government succeeds in retaining control of all subsurface resources); c. Transportation; d. Construction; e. Finance; f. Tourism; g. Trade (retail, wholesale and storage); h. Manufacturing and processing; i. Service industries (i.e. maintenance contracts and government service agency work such as welfare, health and education). [from the author's field notes, April,1980]

A clear example of how Dene Nation central planning could benefit the communities was cited by a Dene Nation economic advisor. It has been the policy of the Department of Indian Affairs, he said, to promote community retail outlets. These local stores have not, for the most part, been able to compete with the Hudson's Bay Stores which are established in so many of the settlements. This is partially because the Bay can offer credit and take losses in a particular settlement and makes up those losses from its other twenty-five (an approximation) stores in the Territories. It is also because the Bay has a central purchasing system that enables them to buy many products at far lower wholesale prices (because of the volume of its purchases) than any local co-op can hope to match. This means that a local store cannot compete. It is both outpriced and outstocked by its consolidated competitor.

One community successfully boycotted the Bay until it shut it doors leaving the field to its local competitors.[34] But this strategy has not worked elsewhere because the Bay was able to outrank local organizers and to hold on until people grew impatient with the inconveniences caused by not having the commodities they were used to having. The kind of solidarity and political will needed in such a struggle must be built on small successes over time. It does not materialize overnight.

The Dene Nation's central planning agency could , for example, incorporate a wholesale commodity goods warehouse. By buying co-operatively for twenty-six communities, the Bay monopoly could be broken. The profits from such a venture could be ploughed back into other Dene development schemes.

Another major area under consideration is a northern transportation system. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent annually getting foods and people from one place to another in the North. An estimated forty per cent of that cost is profits which accrue to southern-Canadian-owned transportation companies. The purchase of a fleet of airplanes, trucks, barges and all-terrain tractor trailor units would provide employment for many people, but more importantly would greatly diminish the cost of northern living for Dene people.

These sorts of ideas are not new to the developing world. There are, in fact, many fatalities among the numerous attempts that have been made to operationalize such plans. One such example is Air Zaire which is now managed and operated completely by foreigners.[35]

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[34] Fort Wrigley

What is missing from many such national plans can be summarized in the following points:

1. It did not meet actual needs of the majority of the people. The necessary foundations of national development are in the rural communities where the masses of the people actually live. If a scheme such as a transportation system truly grows out of local needs *as defined locally* in the twenty-six settlements of "Denendeh", it has a far better chance of working.

2. The technical and middle-management competence to consistently carry off the enterprise was missing. Also missing was a workable training program to move nationals into those jobs within a reasonable period of time. Political pressure forced the hiring of technically unprepared individuals and the operation suffered or even collapsed.

3. Questions of culture-conflict were not examined and dealt with. The technology and systems of organization were not adapted to fit local cultural patterns. Numerous development schemes have ground to a halt beneath a mountain of paper,

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[35] In fact the entire economy of the country, including its national bank, is now managed by Europeans.

unpaid bills, and scheduling problems. The scale of economic activity we are talking about is entirely foreign to the Dene traditional world. Clearly, cultural learning would have to take place alongside technical learning to ensure the success of large economic operations.

It becomes obvious that economic development cannot be isolated from cultural consolidation and cultural change, and political transformation. Authentic development for the Dene will require simultaneous work in all three areas.

The overabundance of political and cultural rhetoric has caused many Dene people to turn their backs on these development imperatives because they seemed to bear no fruit. When cultural and political issues are linked to economic ones, the combination lock on local development springs open. It is important for Dene organizers to retain a balanced view of the problem. Sheer modernization will yield the same bitter fruits when promoted by brown people as it has when promoted by whites. All three elements of the development trinity--culture, politics, and economics--are essential. If one or the other is removed, the process will disintegrate.

The Five-Point Model

Let us return to the Five-Point Model and discuss briefly how its application in a local community could affect the economic development of that community.

Recall to mind our analysis of settlement life given in Chapter Four. We have said that there is a polarization of young and old, and of traditional and imported values. We have said that many people perceive the present system (welfare, schools) as beneficial and are afraid to risk losing the little they have.

What we have not said is that during the past few years, fur prices have skyrocketed. One lynx pelt is now worth approximately eight hundred dollars (1980 prices). Many of the jobless and previously idle youth who were awaiting the fulfillment of promises made by the formal school system have abandoned their vigil and are seeking their fortunes on the traplines. Indeed there are fortunes to be made. Incomes of $20,000.00 to $50,000.00 were reported for 1978 in many Dene communties.

The socio-economic climate in the settlements is ripe for initiation of local economic development projects.

Again, the development of the institution of the Dene local assembly (or some other participatory local model) is vital to this process, because it can bring people into dialogue on an equal footing, no matter what their connection is to the colonial government structure of local advisory committees, and no matter what their economic standing is in the community. If this institution and its executive become the local agency of development, charged with the task of co-ordinating all development-related activities, the process of local development would be effectively in local hands.

It is not difficult to imagine (structurally at least) that a combination of the band and settlement councils would become the executive to the Dene local assemblies, and that funding through these combined councils would be administered by local people.

Returning to our definition of development as stated by Nyerere and the Dene, development occurs when a people participate in the process of deciding what development means for them, and what direction it will take their society, and when they participate in the implementation of their collective aims.

The five-point model calls for a continual re-examination of the values at the base of development by the people who are developing themselves. It calls for the use of the consensus process and for leaders who are responsive to the outcome of that process. Finally, it calls for a new political and cultural unit. On the national level this is the new Dene Nation. On the local level it is the institution of the Dene local assembly. This unit has the potential to act as the local architects of a local development plan.

It is difficult to imagine how such a local endeavour could succeed without some outside help, both financial and technical. For one thing, local people need to be introduced to other options than those they already know. Many new skills and much new information will be needed.

We have suggested earlier that the Dene are new to settlement life and have much to learn in order to effectively govern themselves and administer their own affairs. Skills in the art of group consultation and decision-making must be patiently nurtured.

A new appreciation of the meaning and value of a community's self-determination needs to be cultivated. Part of what has been destroyed by the colonial process is the frame of reference that perceives the community's well-being as being the means to attaining individual well-being. The promulgation of Adam Smith's doctrine that the goal of society is best served if its individual members pursue their own economic self-interest has led, in the settlements of the Northwest Territories, to an apathetic indifference and a stunted awareness of how the conditions of the community at large do, in fact, affect the well-being of its individual members.

E. Socio-Cultural Development

The pattern of social relations, the customs, the beliefs, the values and the world view, which all together comprise what we have been calling the Dene lifeways, are changing and have been changing since the first metal tool and the first white man's disease found its way from the Arctic coast to the interior Athabascan tribes. What must now happen if authentic development is to occur is that the Dene must gain control of change process. It must become conscious and intentional. For the past fifty years changes like the individualization of income through wage labour and transfer payments, the move into government-provided houses in established settlements, and the education of Dene children in a foreign language, culture, and religious system have directly caused Dene people to change their lifeways. Because of these and other influences, Dene people have changed the way they relate to each other, and have changed their relationship to the land, their understanding of their place in the structure of a global society, and their concepts of what it will mean to be a Dene in the years to come. Thomas Berger wrote:

"The condition of the people in the North today is in many respects, the product of white domination of native people and native society. That this domination has often been benevolent does not at all diminish its devastating consequences for the patterns of collective and co-operative self-reliance that are the tradition of northern native people." [Berger 1977 Vol.2:XI]

The challenge implicit in the term "socio-cultural development" is no less than the soul which animates the entire development process. The reader will recall that we have defined development as a process through which a people actualize their own individual and collective potential. This actualization is predicated on an increase in power over one's self, one's environment and the society at large, so that the passive victims of the process of underdevelopment become active controllers of their own response to the forces which confront their society.

To become a self-actualizing society means that a people will have decided and agreed on the goals of development and the methods that will be employed to meet these goals. Although we have cited a part of the following passage about values in another context, its relevancy here will be self-evident.

"Values play a crucial role in decision making. The process of making decisions is based on the capacity to assess preferences, to trade off advantages and disadvantages and to examine the future consequences of present decisions. If values did not exist or were ignored, we could not deliberately choose between one course of action and another. Politics would be impossible without values, and so would objectives, programs and strategies." [Botkin et al 1979":39]

On the local community level, Dene development will require that, as a collective, people come to grips with the implications of their own competing value basis. For example, some reconciliation is needed to harmonize the valuation of individual autonomy with the urgent need for group collaboration for development. Other such conflicts are the Euro-Canadian values of "success","material advancement" and "rugged individualism" with the Dene values of egalitarianism, co-operation and communal sharing.

The Club of Rome emphatically states that both value systems are in operation in most developing societies and must be accounted for. They say that the kind of innovative learning for development that societies must do requires a reassessment of all values--old and new--and a conscious selection of value options. [Ibid:40-41]

How does all of this translate to concrete action in Dene communities? Recall our description in Chapter Four of the social malaise that has engulfed many settlements. Distressing social pathology such as widespread economic dependency, a feeling of apathetic impotence in the face of munipulative government structures, family breakdown, intra-generational conflict, and increase in both petty and violent crimes, as well as juvenile delinquency and rampant alcoholism - these are the real-life conditions that Dene community organizers must confront.

In face of these obstacles, organizers must somehow try to inaugurate a long list of "essentials" and "urgent necessities" These include the following: 1. the strengthening of the moral and religious underpinnings of the society, generally referred to in this study as the value base; 2. the development of unique cultural characteristics in each settlement including traditional music and arts, crafts, language, and history; 3. the strengthening of the extended family structure and kinship patterns to accommodate settlement life; 4. initiation of programs to accommodate settlement life; 5. initiation of programs to educate and promote the development of women; 6. developing comprehensive youth programs which tap this precious human energy resource for local development purposes and which include adequate recreational alternatives and community-based vocational training; 7. initiating programs for older people, specifically aimed at cultivating channels through which they can contribute meaningfully to the ongoing development of the community; 8. the encouraging of all forms of education, but especially non-formal adult education; 9. the development of local health care programs that train and utilize the local people in medical and para-medical capacities.

This is, of course, only a partial list. Most, if not all of these activities, are the stated goals of some existing agency now in place in many of the communities. To this list should be added the social band-aid functions: 1. a local legal and court system appropriate to the culture; 2. local police; 3. local family help and counselling; and 4. alcohol education and rehabilitation programs under local initiative and control.

These services are also in place, though generally not of local creation or under local control. Most of the services now in place represent benevolent southern Canadian efforts to band-aid the social pathologies resulting from colonial intrusion and consequent cultural decimation.

Solutions?

In order to stimulate local development in the three areas Berger defined as critical (political, economic and socio-cultural), a two-pronged effort is called for. One will address the consciousness and understanding of individuals; the other will generate unified, dynamic, healthy and adaptive communities capable of critical self-awareness leading to effective collective action.

Any short, pat answer to the question is bound to be naive, paternalistic and irrelevant to the real world in which the Dene live. The Dene Nation itself is moving into the communities on two fronts, and these in fact approximate a two-prong strategy outlined above. The general thrust of Dene community programs today are, in broad terms, community education and community development.

Community Education for Community Development

Education, especially in the Dene context, addresses the individual, but it is also a principal agent for helping individuals become more competent contributors to the life of their community.

The Dene Nation staff members working on educational problems have prepared lucid critiques which point out deficiencies of the existing N.W.T. school system. What education would be like under Dene control has not yet been adequately worked out. Pioneer efforts are underway in several communities to determine what the goals of Dene education should be. This work is at present severely hampered because no adequate method has been discovered to assist the community in deciding what kind of education it wants for its children. [from the author's field notes, April, 1981]

Since the Dene Nation itself is grappling with the problem of engaging local communities in the debate about Dene education it seems fair to offer a recommendation about how such a process could be initiated.

Participatory Research

Participatory research is fundamentally a "combination of community participation in decision making with methods of social investigation". [Hall 1975:10] In order to work within the operational definitions of development posed by Nyerere and Goulet, the person or persons intervening in the community for the purposes of development are confronted by a very delicate strategy dilemna. We will refer to this agent, whether an individual or a team, as the "development catalyst".

This dilemna relates to an initial definition of the existing condition of the society. The critical issue here is to decide *whose* perspective on life as it is in the developing society will generate the definition of "the problem" for future learning and action.

Denis Goulet addresses this issue in his description of the work of Georges Allo, a pioneer in participatory research who specialized in values-clarification for development, "What seems to be required is a procedure wherein research is allied to a pedagogy aimed at helping a populace achieve heightened self-awareness of its value dilemnas, and to devise a strategy for inducing value changes desired by the people themselves." [Goulet 1977:346]

This must be done in a holistic context so that the relative position of all of the society's values can be viewed as a single montage. [Ibid] What is at issue here is that the value universe which acts as the ground for social interactions be identified and reflected upon. Out of such an endeavour will emerge certain value conflicts. Some of these will be the stepchildren of ignorance and of vested interests. The important first step is to identify what is valued, and by whom.

Georges Allo outlines a four-step procedure for creating the "dynamic values profile" that is called for at the initial stages of a development process. Very briefly summarized they are:

1. *Preliminary Synthesis.* Here the development catalyst and his local aides solicit "from the natural elites in a community" and from popular spokesman "having no influence beyond their kinship group", their view of what their "total existential human situation is, what it means, and what it ought to be". Information is also sought as to "which changes are affecting them, how society's members assess these changes, as well as what their perception is of issues

lying outside these changes". The overall goal here is to obtain "preliminary global notions of what is valuated and what is devaluated by the populace." [Goulet 1977:347]

2. *Systematic Observation.* A careful study is made of the primary group's systems, activities, cultural and economic systems, and world view using social science research methods but working from hypotheses provided by the people themselves in stage one.

3. *Reflective Synthesis.* A team of trained investigators combined with local people participate in a process in which those who have conducted the preliminary synthesis (stage one) and those who have conducted the systematic observation (stage two) confront their findings as a group. The challenge here is to formulate a reflective synthesis of the values universe of the society under study. The power of final decision on interpretation of these data rests with the local residents themselves.

Allo points out that at this stage diverse interest groups, classes and ideologies are represented and so the reflective value synthesis offered will vary. This diversity is desirable, he argues, and each partial synthesis is made to confront all others "in order to test the critical survival value of each" and to probe for possible concensus of perpspective. [Ibid:348]

4. *Feedback to Populace.* This consists of "resubmitting the critical synthesis obtained in stage three to the informants, who provided the naive synthesis in stage one.

[Ibid] The choice of symbols is critical. The initial informants can reject the new synthesis, correct it, or accept it tentatively as a possible representation of their own growing understanding of the value universe in which they operate.

It should be noted here that Allo's work predates by some fifteen years much of the literature on research used as a development tool. [Allo 1963] Later writers [Hall 1975 and Jackson 1977] tend to see this value research as an integrated part of a larger process. Paulo Freire developed an approach to adult education that synthesizes the work of people like Allo but which has a revolutionary ideology at its base.

Critics of Freire's approach [e.g. LaBelle 1972] have argued that his reflection-synthesis-praxis model [Friere 1970:75] engages the population in a process leading to, but never arriving at, the praxis stage. What is not accounted for in this sort of critique is the following:

1. It is impossible to retain old socio-economic forms in the presence of new levels of consciousnes. This was later demonstrated by the social reforms a repressive Brazilian government was forced to make even after Freire was deported.

2. The negotiated relationship of equals that Freire calls for models a new approach to development and development "experts" which reduces dependence on the experts and which generates a self-propelled process towards

self-reliance. Again, Brazil is a good example of this, since after Freire had left, the process he began continued. The seed, once planted, developed and bore fruit.

The goal of Freire's now famous pedagogy is to induce the process which, we are arguing, constitutes step one of any development intervention: the creation of an operational definition of how it all is.

Freire describes a collaborative effort to "decode" the various life "moments" which comprise the totality of the life of the area. The collaboration is between residents and the development catalyst. The investigators register their observations in notebooks. These data are discussed in teams and eventually images are codified that represent various aspects of life as it is--a part of a totality. Participants then present these codified images in the form of newspaper anecdotes, drawings, and snapshots to their peers in adult literacy classes for selection, which in turn will spark new perceptions, codifications, synthesis of understanding leading to some action on the theme. All of this is again followed by reflection.

This is the root of the development process as defined by [Nyerere 1976]. Man reflecting on his predicament is then able to decide on the direction development should take his society. He is committed to the action which this reflective process has dictated must be taken, because of his very involvement in the process movement through the act of reflection.

It may help the reader to re-examine Roberts' model of community development (see figure 2).

It is conceivable for a community to enter this circle at any one of the stages. What participatory research proposes as a strategy, is that the learning stage is often a useful and practical point of entry. It may be necessary to go round the merry-go-round several times before the subjects of development become truly engaged in the research endeavour but once this occurs, field reports indicate, the entire process can take on a self-generating life of its own.[36]

While the participatory research approach can encompass all stages of Roberts' model, its activity is centered in the large box labelled "learning". It should be understood, however, that any pictoral model is misleading in that it suggests distinct separation between the stages. In practice, learning is an aspect of all the stages. Participatory research is research with a pedagogical motive aimed at mobilization.

Learning as an isolated community development strategy has little appeal to people who are looking for "substantial improvements" in their private or collective lives. It is therefore with the greatest of emphasis that I state that participatory research aimed at deriving goals for Dene education *must* be linked to the economic improvement of the community.

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[36] See Robert Kliener, Holger Stub, and James Lanachan in their "Brief Communications", a report about a participatory research project with warring street gangs in New York which led to the politicization of the youth, the forming of a coalition between the one-time enemies for purposes of "fighting the common enenemy" (the system) and an ongoing interest in critical research. Cited in *Human Organization*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1975, pages 391-393.

Some General Remarks About Dene Education

There are at least three requirements for a Dene educational system that would enable the system to make a positive contribution to the development process.

1. Dene education should be connected to traditional roots, including local languages
2. Education must be tied to development.
3. Community "innovative learning" should be the goal.

1. Reconnect Education to Traditional Roots

Dene education should become as it was in pre-colonial times, rooted in Dene values so that, a. the learner learns primarily so that he can be of service to the community; and b. the community, having a vested interest in the progress of the learner, assumes responsiblity for insuring that learning relevant to community needs occurs.[37]

There are several concomitants to this principle.

1. The "community" has to know what it needs.

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[37] See Chapter Four for an analysis of traditional Dene education patterns.

2.

The newly accepted measure of the worth of a man following Adam Smith and David McClelland [1961] must be replaced by the traditional measure--competency in service to the community.

The southern Canadian doctrine of schooling encourages the community to abdicate its right and responsiblity for the education of its members to professionals. Hence, in order to reconnect education to traditional roots, the role of professional educators, the school facilities that now exist, the curriculum now followed, the credentializing and evaluation system now employed--all of these must be revolutionized.

2. Education Must Be Consciously Tied To Development

Coombs and Ahmed have categorized four types of educational needs for rural development: [Coombs and Ahmed 1975:15]

1.

General or Basic Education: literacy, arithmetic and an elementary understanding of science and one's environment. These are the typical goals of formal primary education. More sophisticated scientific training should also be available providing it serves overall development aims.

2.

Family Improvement Education: Knowledge, skills and attitudes useful in improving the quality of family life. This could include health and nutrition, homemaking, child care and home repairs, to mention a few categories.

3.

Community Improvement Education: Education aimed at strengthening Dene local and national institutions such as government, cooperatives, schools and community projects. In Dene terms this would imply the development of a local consensus government model. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes which would facilitate greater participation of ordinary people, especially at the local level, in the process of deciding the speed, the mode, and the direction change is to take their collective lives, is a kind of learning that has no end point. It is a development process in itself, and constitutes the very backbone of development learning needed in Dene settlements.

I emphasize this kind of learning for the Dene for several reasons. First, until the 1950s the majority of Dene lived in traditional camps. The scale of community organization before the move into settlements involved at the most fifty people at a time. Today a new approach to consensus local government must be developed. This new model can and should spring from a family-circle style of self governing, and it must also permit the integration of larger concerns and a cross current of vested interests. It must be local government with a global consciousness.

Secondly, if Dene settlements can maintain the egalitarian and participatory values which pervaded their traditional government as they now generate new political forms, then and only then, I argue, will the communities be in a position in terms of their awareness level to take back control of the education of their members. I therefore view the development of the Dene local consensus government model which features egalitarian participation at its core as the most urgent educative as well as political goal for the settlements.

4.

Occupational Education: This is designed to develop particular knowledge and skills associated with various economic activities useful in making a living.

Much, if not most of what was Dene traditional education was of this type. It is still a very important part of Dene life. In one village I visited (Fort Good Hope) an estimated seventy-five percent of the entire population of men, women and children spent the winter (1979-1980) in the bush hunting and trapping. It is difficult to appreciate just how much expertise is required to live and live well as the Dene do in sub-arctic bush in winter. The families live in canvas tents and carry a bare minimum of supplies with them when they go (flour, salt, sugar, coffee, tobacco). Every member of the camp works to his or her capacity.

A few of the skills needed to be sucessful in the sub-Arctic bush (not to succeed can be fatal) are bush navigation (no compass or map), trapping skills, hunting and stalking skills, knowledge of how to completely use all parts of an animal (skins, meat, bones, intestine, teeth--everything) As well as sled making, dog mushing, ice fishing and blizzard survival. No Dene child should grow up bereft of these essential skills.

Today Dene sources estimate that eighty per-cent of all Dene families depend on bush harvesting activities for a substantial portion of their annual income. It is as viable part of the economic life of the Dene today as it was in 1900.

Occupational education really means the linking of education with production and survival. It means learning from the practices of improving production because of what has been learned. Local economic development enterprises become local research and learning centers. The goal of work-study programs for development is to "derive from productive activities the programmatic content of the different disciplines". [Freire 1978:21]

The value of the social learning for the children who experience such a program should not be underestimated either. In Cuba, Tanzania, China, and Guinea-Bissau, school children are expected to grow gardens, build buildings, produce marketable commodities, maintain their school building and govern themselves. What better way to learn how to participate in the decision-making and the development process of the community then to "learn by doing" as a part of the school program?

Through such a program values like "social solidarity rather than individualism, the principle of mutual help", of "practical creativity in the face of essential problems and the unity of mental and manual labour are experienced daily". [Ibid":43] But the education of children is not enough. Adult education, and indeed community life as a learning enterprise, is what is called for.

The Goal of Community Innovative Learnng

The overall goal of education should be community innovative learning. Botkin et al [1979] define innovative learning in contrast to maintenance learning.

"The acquisition of fixed outlooks, methods, and rules for dealing with known and recurring situations... It is a type of learning designed to maintain an existing system or an established way of life." [Botkin et al 1979:10]

That kind of learning is no longer adequate for the Dene. Theirs is a living culture, reborn out of the struggle to survive the most devastating and unprecedented attack they had ever known as a people--colonial intrusion. The kinds of changes wrought upon them were not ancticipated by the traditional learning pattern. Indeed, maintenance learning is not anticipatory by definition.

If Dene culture is to continue to live, it must change to meet the challenges of world citizenship which faces all of us in approaching years. The kind of innovative learning Dene communities need will require, following Botkin et al, two indispensable features.

1.

Anticipation: The capacity to learn how to anticipate future challenges and future learning needs. Anticipatory learning for the Dene implies the creation of new values out of the traditional Dene value base.

2.

Participation: The involvement in the learning process of all members of the community, because all have a stake in what is learned and what is decided.

Implicit in all of this is the assumption that communities, and even whole societies, learn. We are used to viewing the learner as an individual. But the learning needs generated by a global crisis of staggering and unprecedented proportions require a quantum leap in education--a leap which entails conscious learning by human collectives. The Dene are, in my view, much better prepared to take up such a learning challenge than are those of us still completely locked into an industrial system that rewards individualization, specialization, and selfishness.

The Case for Local Language Revival

While it is true that English is an essential tool for the Dene in acquiring the technical competence to manage the affairs of "Denendeh" and for learning from and participating in a global society, there is a strong case to be made for stressing local language literacy and training in the settlements.

It is difficult to make a linguistic generalization about the Dene or Dene settlements. There are four

Athabascan languages as well as a wide range of regional and local dialects. There are also differences in language usage between generation within a single language group. James Ross points out in his recent study on Dene Language that "these types of differences are not unique to Dene languages and communities, in the Northwest Territories" but "are characteristic of languages generally". [Ross 1981:4]

At present the government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, is running an experimental program in Fort Franklin in which Slavey is the principle language of instruction in the first two years of schooling (grades one and two). Plans are underway to extend this program another year and to start another such program in some other appropriate settlement.

It seems to make sense to conduct basic education in the preferred language of the settlement. Young children who are still developing cognitive and linguistic capacities may benefit from the continuity provided by the usage of the same language at school and at home. Psycholinguistic research based on Piaget's stages of cognitive development is not conclusive in its findings about second language acquisition at a time when the mother tongue has not yet been fully acquired. It appears, however, that people go through the same stages for a second language as they do for the first. Hence there may be some truth to the notion that it is better to let a child fully acquire his own tongue--and the cognitive capacities that develop as language is acquired--before introducing a second language. At best, the results of the research in this field are tentative.

What the Department of Education has not seen is the political and cultural importance of local languages in the development process. Implicit in the local language schooling program is:

"The assumption that there is only one way to be nonliterate, that the 'oral' state is in some way the absence or lack of development of the literate state. Researchers have too easily equated the non-literacy of competent elders with the non-literacy of children in literate societies." [Scollon and Scollon 1979:3]

The Scollons argue, along with Friere [1970,1978] and the Club of Rome [Botkin et al 1979], that "what makes illiteracy 'literacy' cannot possibly be simply reading and writing texts, at least in a developmental perpsective." [Ibid] Friere discusses the political literacy of freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau who could not write their names, but who could articulate precisely the nature and objectives of their struggle for the reconstruction of their country. Botkin et al discuss "ethical literacy": "people who can philosophize and act at high levels of morality". They go on to say

"Any implication that this type of person can *a priori* be considered less able, less prepared, or less worthy than the one who can read and [who] yet display[s] intolerance or racism is an anachronism whose time for change is come... A minimum requirement for the ethical dimension in literacy would be to treat all human beings with respect and without discrimination." [Botkin et al 1979:76-77]

There is a resistance among Dene elders to having their language written down and taught in schools. They argue that when this is done, essential cultural values are violated which actually destroy both the meaning and the spirit of Dene languages. They say that Dene culture and Dene languages are inexorably bound up together, and that to tamper with one is to destroy the other. [from the author's field notes, April, 1981]

Scollon and Scollon seem to be saying the same thing. They argue that anglophone literacy is taught in specific focussed ways which violate Athapascan cultural norms and communication patterns. They stress the individual style which characterizes Dene story telling, and indeed all learning situations. These situations are:

"A one-on-one situation with a story teller and one person who responds. Others who are present do not interfere with this jointly produced performance. Both narratives and riddles are used as ways of teaching careful observation, indirectness, and non-intervention." [Scollon and Scollon 1979:6]

We have already discussed at some length the cultural clashes that occur in a classroom between Dene and

Euro-Canadian values (Chapter Four). Language is the intimate bedfellow of culture. To translate Euro-Canadian curriculum into Dene languages may be a subversion so subtle, but so total, of Dene cultural values, ethics, and communication patterns that what is now known as the "Dene way" may be lost to future generations.

"What is Athabaskan about Athabascan...is not non-literacy. There are literate Athabascans. It is...a very high regard for human individuality, a deeper respect for human difference, so much so that many Athabascans feel quite uncomfortable with any designation that seeks to group or classify individuals..." [Ibid:11]

Until this massified essay-style basal reader form of teaching and exercising literacy skills can be overthrown by Dene educators, who themselves select appropriate literacy forms that complement Dene cultural values and interaction patterns, it may be best that the Dene Nation follow the advice of their elders and support other forms of Dene "literacy" than those promoted by formal schooling.

The importance of oral competence in local languages for the development process cannot be overstressed. However, Paulo Friere writes

"In truth, the process of liberation of a people does not take place in profound and authentic terms unless this people reconquers its own Word, the right to speak it, to "pronounce" it, and to "name" the word: to speak the word as a means of liberating their own language through that act from the supremacy of the dominant language of the colonizer." [Friere 1978:126]

The naming of the world, in Dene terms for Dene people, is a large part of the comminity creation process. It is not simply a matter of changing the name of the Mackenzie River back to its Dene name. It is the ideological process of determining what it means to be Dene in any given context. The operation of a local sawmill or a school or a computer assembly plant might all be local projects that would demand such reflection of its Dene participants. As one astute respondent stated:

"You can't deal with ideological issues for community development with Joe Dene in English. People can conceptualize and express themselves five thousand times better in their own language." [from the author's field notes, April, 1981]

I therefore recommend that ways of promoting and enhancing the oral usage of Dene languages in settlements be vigorously pursued at this time. Such a program could include local language radio, the promotion of local languages in the homes, government offices, community meetings, and recreational events, and the establishment of a local language and culture centre for the study of how local languages could be written and taught in future ways that do not violate basic Dene cultural values.

F. Community Development: Plans and Proposals

We have said that a two-pronged effort is needed in Dene communities; one that would address the consciousness and understanding of individuals; and the other which will generate unified, dynamic, healthy and adaptive communities capable of critical self-awareness leading to effective collective action. For the individual aspect of this strategy, a range of education-oriented issues was discussed. Let us now turn our attention to the community dimension of the problem.

The importance of community development work in the settlements has been close to the heart of Dene leaders from the early days of the movement. James Wah-Shee was a C.Y.C. volunteer whose orientation was community development. George Erasmus was the Dene's community development co-ordinator for several years. Many other active Dene leaders are very committed to the concept of community development, so much so that a number of very key individuals have taken community development jobs in small settlements, refusing to continue working at the exectuive level in Yellowknife.

The belief that a strong national organization would provide the broader context for local development propelled executive officers to make choices which tended to alienate the communities unable to see the relevance of a national dream to local realities.

In November, 1980, seven people completed the first phase of a federally-funded, Dene-operated community development training program. The program was housed at Fort Good Hope. That program, as it was carried out, tended to focus on Dene history, values, and cultural issues. It helped the participants to gain a much deeper understanding of their own roots and of the colonial process that had undermined Dene lifeways. It did not equip participants to generate community development programs,however. Very little emphasis was placed on economic issues or on the day-to-day community organizing skills that would be needed.

Participants were generally young and although their presence in the program had the blessing of their local community leadership, the linkage between the program and the real problems of their home communities were never adequately dealt with. When trainees returned to their homes they found a disillusioning gap between their ideological grasp of the challenge facing the Dene people and the concrete conditions in the settlements.

The Dene nation's own evaluation of the first year [Dene Nation 1981 Final Report for the Community Development Project] recommended a number of substantial changes, ranging from improved relations with home and host communities, a concentration on animation skills, to a greater focus on the use of Dene languages.

A new proposal has been submitted to federal funding sources which would greatly expand and, in my opinion, improve upon, the first or pilot stage program.

The basic concept of this program is that fifteen communities would form adult education or culture groups (to borrow Friere's term) of fifteen to twenty people. They would study the development problems of their own community. Presumably their goal would be to generate local development projects, and to monitor those projects as they occurred.

This core group would select one of its members to go to an intensive training program. The one selected would travel to the community where the school was being held, and would here participate in structured learning experiences aimed at training him to do commmunity development work. He would then return to his culture group in his home community and teach them what he had learned. The local group would try to initiate local development projects as they acquire the vision and skill to do so.

The trainees would return to the school four times, and each time would carry back what was learned to the home group. It is hoped that the local culture group would continue after the training portion of the program is finished.

The content of training in this proposal includes Dene history, law and languages, effects of colonization, practical skills such as how to plan events and run meetings, and information about managing small businesses, credit unions, co-ops, health centers and other practical development possibilities.

This proposal is not yet carefully worked out in its detail. Yet on the basis of written documentatoin presented to the chiefs at their April, 1981 leadership meeting, and on the basis of my development research in Dene settlements, there are certain key issues that need to be raised about the plan.

1. The Focus of the Program

If such a plan is to generate local development, the local culture group must be the principal focus of attention. It is this group, and not the trainees, who will make or break the program. Accordingly, I have certain questions that would in my view, need sound answers if the proposal is to succeed as a community development plan, and not a mere training package.

1.

Who will be the members of this "core" culture group? How would members be selected?

2.

In every settlement there are twelve to twenty individuals who constitute the local leadership. Some are counsellors, (and of course the chief), others are elders, still others are active community members, and still others are informal power actors whose role is hidden by their seeming passivity or inactivity. Most of these individuals serve on various local committees of which there are (as previously stated) at least a dozen in every settlement. Would the culture groups not duplicate the work of council, committees and the informal "government" of the community?

3.

What would the relationship be between the Dene council and the culture group?

4.

What would be the perceived role (by community members) of the culture group? Is it a committee? An adult education class? A new local government model?

5.

Who will lead (guide, catalyze, monitor) the culture group? Is it realistic to expect these groups to operate on their own and without concrete goals that relate to a substantial improvement in the quality of life of participants?

I recommend that the best staff people available be hired to co-ordinate the in-community groups. Further, these groups should be the curriculum planners for the training school. The community groups should, at least in part, be specifiying what they need to know. The schools should exist to meet their needs. A prime activity of the group should be to conduct participatory research for development in their own settlements. Core group activities should soon be focussed on some concrete development project (e.g. a business, a co-op, a health center).

2. Funding

The funding of training should be accompanied by the funding for local development projects. Unless there is money available when it is needed to pay for the launching of a local project when it is conceived by a core group, the entire momentum of the project will be lost. A few failures of this kind would kill the entire concept of collective action or development for many people.

I therefore recommend that preliminary negotiations be carried out with potential funding sources well ahead of the start of the community development program, so that adequate lead time has been given to insure that funding avenues are open when specific projects which qualify for that funding are received.

3. Linkage

The community development program should be linked with the following important Dene Nation programs:

1.

Political development: The development of adequate local government models that are culturally compatible with Dene traditions and which maximize the participation of all important groups and all individuals in the community concensus process.

2.

Economic Development: Regional and local economic planning and projects designed to improve the economic life of the community should be linked with the community development program.

3.

Socio-cultural Development: Especially needed is educational research and reform as well as community improvement projects such as health conferences, alcohol programs and women's programs.

As this community development plan is essentially a centralist creation to be imposed on fifteen unique local communities, it is important to expect considerable variation in the style of operation of each local project. The greatest danger of any such program in Dene settlements is that it become just another program, organization, or committee competing with all the others to justify its own existence to its funding source.

We have stated in strong terms, in the section in this chapter on political development, that there is an urgent need for the development process to be controlled by one local agency. We said that the appropriate body for this purpose is the Dene local assembly, by which we mean the Dene council (however it is chosen) and the chief, and the community members all participating in a proces which produces the consensus view of the community. The new community development program must somehow fit in to that pattern, and not create an alternate and competing local structure if it is to accomplish the purpose for which it has been created.

Women in Dene Development

Special attention should be given to the role Dene women are now playing and could play in future development ventures. The Native Women's Society, an independent women's organization with membership in virtually all Dene settlements, is reportedly [Native Press, December 2, 1980] the fastest growing native organization in the Territories. The native women's group operates basic home management courses in Yellowknife and Inuvik which touched on health, nutrition, finances and budgeting, food storage and preparation, sewing, and native crafts. They also manager a territory-wide native crafts co-op which collects and sells leather and bead work and other handmade craft items produced by native women.

Their central aim, as stated by a society staff representative, is,

"to develop women in the communities to take on roles of decision-making... If you could just see the enthusiasm of these women..." [from the Author's field notes, April,1981]

As local women gain confidence by partipating in local and regional womens councils they come forward to assume more responsible leadership roles in their own communities.

A recent conference co-sponsored by the Dene nation and the Native Women's Society discussed such social issues as family breakdown, alcohol rehabilitation, teenage pregnancy, native medicine, and improvement of local nursing services. These women then returned to their communities to work with local women's groups and community committees for improvement in the areas discussed.

The role of local women's groups is "undercover" in terms of the visible political pattern in most communities.

The women did not often play active leadership roles in traditional Dene family groups, and yet there is strong support for the autonomous initiatives of women in certain development areas, notably health and education.

The Native Women's Society can field programs of health and home management education for any community that wants them. The two obstacles most preventing a wide proliferation of these programs is the severe lack of funding (the women's group say they are the last to get funded and the first to be cut in times of austerity), and a lack of field staff to support the local co-ordinators.

There are three solid reasons why it would be wise for the Dene Nation to support these initiatives of the Native Women's Society in Dene settlements.

1.

It would be politically wise to do so at this time when the Dene Nation needs to re-establish its relationship with local development issues. The funding and supporting of local women's education programs is likely to generate a enormous amount of goodwill and future co-operation that no amount of "liberated" rhetoric could secure.

2.

The population of Dene communities are at least fifty percent female. Strengthening of women's capacity to participate in local development projects would greatly strengthen the political will and staying power of newly emerging local institutions.

3.

Women have a unique contribution to make in that they tend in Dene society to be even more rooted to the traditional values, to family, to local language, and even to the land, then men do. This is especially true of women between the ages of thirty and fifty-five, who are now raising children, and who have experienced in their youth or childhood something of the traditional life-ways.[38]

The socio-cultural development of Dene communities cannot, in my view, be achieved independently of the progress of Dene women. One female respondent who had served as a band secretary stated

> "we women care about the real progress of our people. We want our children to have good educations and good health. We don't care about all the political games. We women work together with each other to make things better." [from the author's field notes, April,1981]

More concentrated attention on, and recognition of, the importance of the women's issues would strengthen all other Dene Nation development programmed in the community. To ignore women's issues in the context of Dene development may be a little like trying to bake bread without adding the yeast. The enterprise is likely to fall flat.

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[38] The observation is my own, based on field visits to the North, and on two years of living in a Loucheaux community in the Yukon, and on interviews with many native women for purposes of this study.

G. Summary

In this chapter we have examined the issue of local development in Dene settlements from three perspectives: political development, economic development, and soci-cultural development. Following is a list of the major recommendations that were made in this chapter.

Political Development

1.

The long-range vision of Dene nationalism must be connected with the concrete realities of day-to-day life in Dene settlements. This connection must be made in the minds and hearts of the ordinary Dene people.

2.

Community development should seek to make tangible improvements to the lives of people, either in the form of direct income, or in some visible monument to collective enterprise. Development rhetoric is not enough.

3.

One single agency under local control should give direction to all local development enterprises. All committees and projects should answer to its final authority.

4.

New local government institutions are needed that account for the traditional families in each community and that promote participation of all segments of the local population in consensus decision-making. The Dene local assembly should be developed and promoted.

5.

The Dene Nation organization must be very careful not to replicate the pattern of relating to local communities that the government of the N.W.T. has established. It must seek culturally appropriate avenues of communication that insure that the community, and not some segment of it, are being related to and represented by the national organizations.

6.

The role of "chief" in the political affairs of "Denendeh" should be seriously examined and brought into line with traditional Dene ideas about individual leadership. Greater powers should be vested in the Dene council than on the office of chief. Local chiefs should become local administrators.

7.

Local communication lines must be developed so that Dene attending regional and national meetings communicate the events and ideas derived from those gatherings to all segments of local communities.

8.

All segments of local settlements should be represented at regional or national assemblies. Elected leadership may not represent a significant minority view.

9.

Political development in local settlements is not achievable apart from the economic progress of the people.

Economic Development

1.

Starting and sustaining viable economic enterprises that provide culturally acceptable survival options to Dene people would greatly cushion the impact of large-style industrial development projects.

2.

Economic Development, indeed all forms of local development, cannot wait for a land claims settlement. They must be pursued now and with great vigour to put the necessary processes into motion that would enable Dene settlements to cope with self-determination. The infrastructure for future Dene development must be built now.

3.

Canadian government research and development dollars should be directed to aid the Dene in their search for alternate economic and agricultural models. This research should be controlled by the Dene themselves.

4.

What government money is available for local economic development projects should be pursued. The government must consider long-range funding options for successful projects that can require five to ten years of funding to become permanently independent and secure.

5.

Middle-level management and technical training must be secured by some Dene in every settlement to insure the independent viability of local development enterprises.

6.

Economic development can not be isolated from cultural consolidation, cultural learning, and political development. All three elements of the development trinity (culture, politics, and economics) are essential if progress is to be made in any one of them.

Socio-Cultural Development

1.

A two-pronged development effort is required, one that addresses the consciousness and understanding of individuals, the other which assists in the process of community creation or revitalization.

2.

Participatory research" would be a useful tool for helping a community learn it's own mind on development issues, especially those related to education.

3.

Participatory Research must also be linked to the economic improvement of the community.

4.

Local control of education cannot (likely) be maintained by

Dene settlements unless political development has generated a high degree of participation in community affairs.

5.

Educational goals, methods, and programs should be reconnected to traditional cultural roots.

6.

Education must be consciously tied to development.

7.

The goal of Dene education should be "community innovative learning" as described by the Club of Rome. [cf. Botkin et al]

8.

A much greater emphasis should be placed on the usage of Dene language in all settlements and all Dene Nation activities.

9.

Current methods of teaching literacy could, if used to teach Dene people to read and write their own language, infuse foreign cultural values that could seriously jeopardise Dene cultural integrity. New culturally appropriate methods must be sought for teaching reading and writing.

10.

The translation of Euro-Canadian school curriculum without reference to the cultural content of the substantive material being translated could also be harmful to Dene culture. Great care must be taken to preserve Dene languages as they are until conscious cultural choices can be made about changes.

11.

Reading and writing are a small part of "literacy". Cultural, political and ethical literacy are also essential elements. These later elements should be stressed in Dene education programs emphasizing oral competence in Dene language.

12.

The revival of Dene languages is an important part of the decolonization process.

13.

Community development (C.D.) core groups in local settlements are far more deserving of high quality staff assistants then are a few community development trainees. The emphasis of a C.D. program should be on these groups.

14.

The relationship between C.D. core groups and the local Dene council must be made crystal clear. The public image of the core group must also be carefully cultivated.

15.

Funding should be secured, in advance if possible, for local economic development projects to connect with the activities of a C.D. core group.

16.

Local core groups and their programs should be linked with Dene nation political, economic, and socio-cultural development programs. Fragmentization of efforts is to be avoided at any cost.

17.

A Dene nation centrally planned C.D. package imported into fifteen or more communities could become just another committee or program competing for community energy and resources to justify its own existence, unless great care is taken to tailor each and every project to specific local circumstances.

18.

Any C.D. program in a local settlement must fit in to the local pattern of operations. It is primarily the C.D. program; and not the local pattern that must be flexible enough to adapt as required.

19.

The Dene nation should support and encourage the initiatives of the Native Women's Society in Dene settlements.

20.

Special attention should be given to the role of the women in Dene development programs. This could mean the creation of a special department within the Dene Nation organization for women's issues.

Epilogue

The term "development" as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary describes a growth process from a "rudimentary or immature state" to one of "greater elaboration or completeness". In the organic sciences we can speak of cellular or species development and there is little doubt what the word means in that context. But when we apply the term "development" to persons or societies we immediately encounter problems of basic definition arising out of a myriad of divergent world views and conflicting vested interests.

For example it was in the name of development in Canada's North, that Interprovincial Pipeline Company in coalition with several trans-national oil corporations made application to the the Canadian National Energy Board for permission to build a pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley of the Northwest Territories.

Also in the name of development, the native peoples of the Mackenzie Valley, as well as the government of the Northwest Territories, opposed that same application. In evidence presented to the Board by native witnesses, the following exchange took place:

"Question: Are the Dene against development? Answer: The issue here is not whether the Dene are against development. There is not a human being anywhere that is against the betterment of human society unless that person has lost most of his faculties."[39]

Notice that the term development changes its meaning depending on who uses it. When Exxon Corporation (which controls Imperial Oil, Interprovincial Pipeline Company and Esso Resources) speaks of "development in Canada's North" they really mean the establishment of an elaborate constellation of mechanisms all co-ordinated for the single purpose of extracting subsurface petroleum for use in southern Canada and the United States, and especially for corporate profits.

When the Native people of that same north speak of development they mean the process of change that will result in the "betterment of human society"--in this case their own society. They view industrial development in the north at this time to be the greatest of all possible threats to that "betterment".

Many well-meaning, well-educated southern Canadians view industrial growth in the North as the solution to the "native problem". They cannot understand why the native people should "oppose development". Development is, after all, synonymous with progress, and as Ronald Reagan used to put it, "progress is our most important product".[40]

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[39] From prepared evidence presented to the Canadian National Energy Board in Yellowknife during hearings "On the Matter of the Norman Wells Pipeline Application: N.E.B. Order OH-2-80", p. 7, lines 6-12. The evidence was presented in October of 1980 by George Erasmus, Herb Norwegian and Paul Andrew representing the Dene nation.

[40] Ronald Reagan (at this writing, the President of the United States) was the host of the American Television Series "The General Electric Theatre" (1960-63) and it was

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Modernization. Betterment. Progress. These words have become synonymous with the term "development". But what constitutes "improvement" or "betterment"? On what basis do we decide which changes constitute real "progress"? When we use the term "progress" for human societies we are in fact employing some standard to measure change in order to determine if it is moving toward some more or less predetermined goal. We cannot speak of progress that comes from nowhere and goes to nowhere. Aurelio Peccei, president of the Club of Rome, writes:

"Conceived as the acme of human enterprise, progress has the mission of procuring ever more information and knowledge and ever more goods and equipment for the earth's growing billions, so that they may have material wealth and power with which to tame Nature and to better their existence. Every human group has interpreted this as a mandate to seek as much of this progress as it can for its own good, not distaining to outdo other human groups in in the process." [Botkin et al 1979: XIV]

There have been consequences of the "progress" doctrine which are frightening indeed. Aurelio Peccei continues:

"But it eventually began to dawn on us that by the indiscriminate adoption of this pattern we were all too often paying exhorbitant social or ecological costs for

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[40] (cont'd)in speaking on behalf of the General Electric Company that he made this statement each week for at least two years on national T.V.

improvements obtained, and were even induced to neglect the virtues and values which are the foundation of a healthy society and at the same time the very salt for the quality of life. Then came the creeping doubt that for all its greatness humanity lacked wisdom." [Ibid]

The chilling thrust of the Club of Rome's assessment is its penetrating observation that our actions in the name of "development" or "progress" are destroying the things that are most necessary for collective human survival. These include the earth's biosphere and the value foundations of human society.

Further research is needed to discover, or perhaps to re-discover, which "virtues and values" constitute the "foundations of a healthy society". We must also search for ways of safeguarding that foundation against human foolishness. We need to know how to bind human hearts to appropriate life-preserving ideas.

Denis Goulet, one of the giants in development thinking, writes:

"Now that conventional development wisdoms are being radically questioned even by their former adepts, it is essential to look more closely at the role played by traditions and indigenous values in development... A growing chorus of voices, in rich and poor countries alike, proclaim that full human development is not possible without regard for essential religious values." [1980:484,488]

The Dene are merely asking for the freedom to base their own development on re-vitalized values that emerged from their traditional culture. It is the conclusion of this study that Dene development cannot be achieved in any other way. Another conclusion is that our own development is inextricably linked--in this global society--with that of the Dene and peoples like them.

It is true that the Dene will not be able to develop themselves without help from the "developed" parts of Canada. But it is also true that we, the industrialized nations of the world, will not be able to continue our own development following the path of exploitation we have thus far pursued. Should we try to do so, it is highly likely that our days will be numbered as an intact civilization.

We must search for alternate strategies and goals for our own development. We have much learning to do in this regard, and assuredly, peoples like the Dene can be of great help to us in this enterprise.

One major reason for this is the sheer scale of our dependency on our own system, and the havoc that is caused by even minor interruptions or alterations in various elements (e.g. energy) in that system.

The Dene are not yet so totally locked into western industrial lifeways that they could not experiment with radically different societal forms or economic modes. But their existence in this unique and invaluable position is in great danger. Their predator--our own society--has far greater need of "Denendeh" as an intact and developing entity than it has of the minerals that will be extracted at the price of cultural genocide. We fail to recognize this at our peril.

On the other hand, the bending of talents and resources to aid the "authentic development" of the Dene people might well be the wisest potential investment in its future that Canada will ever make.

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